

# **DAYS & NIGHTS OF SALMON-FISHING IN THE TWEED**

BY

**WILLIAM SCROPE, S.F.S.**

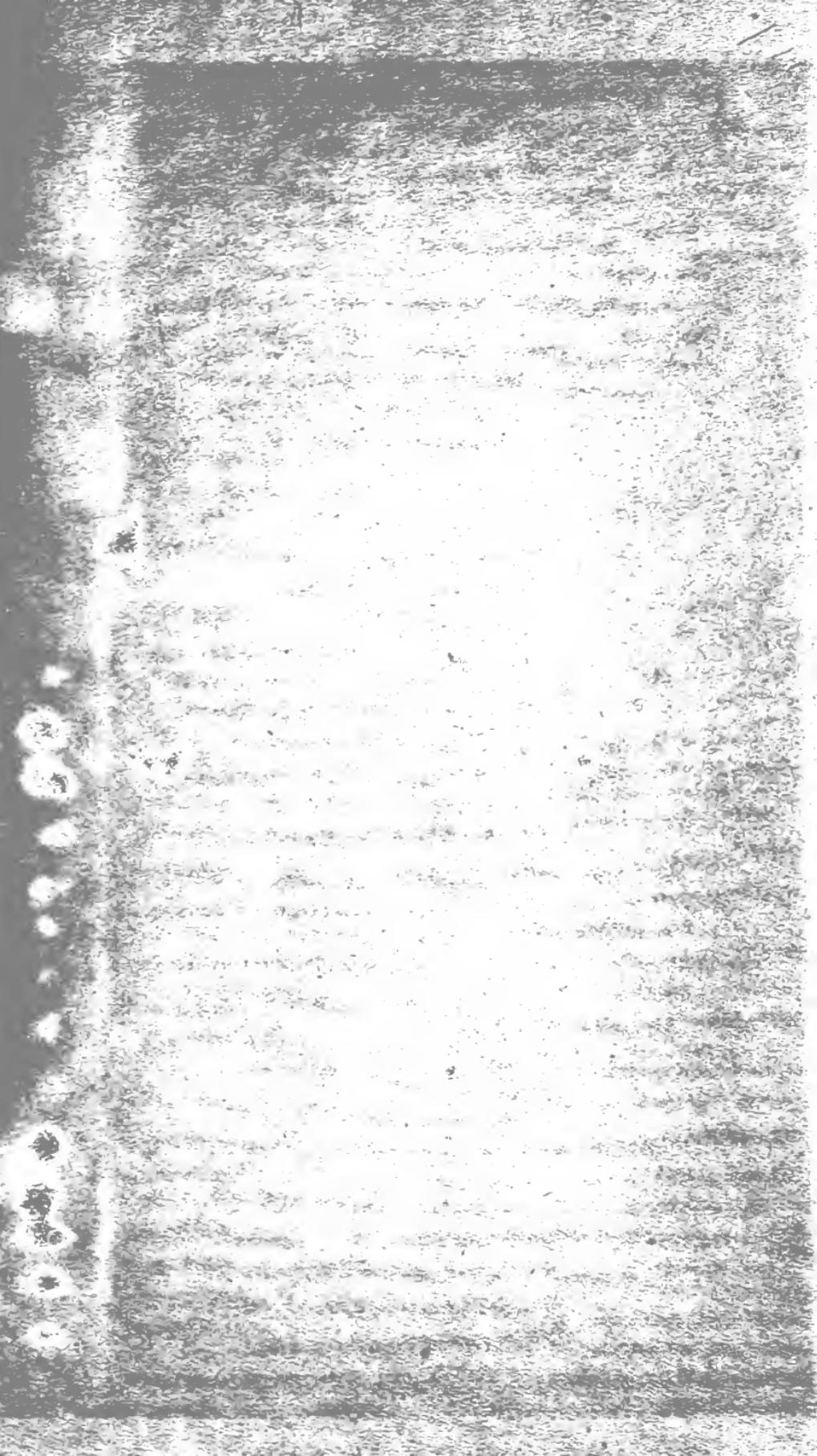
*Edited with an introduction by*

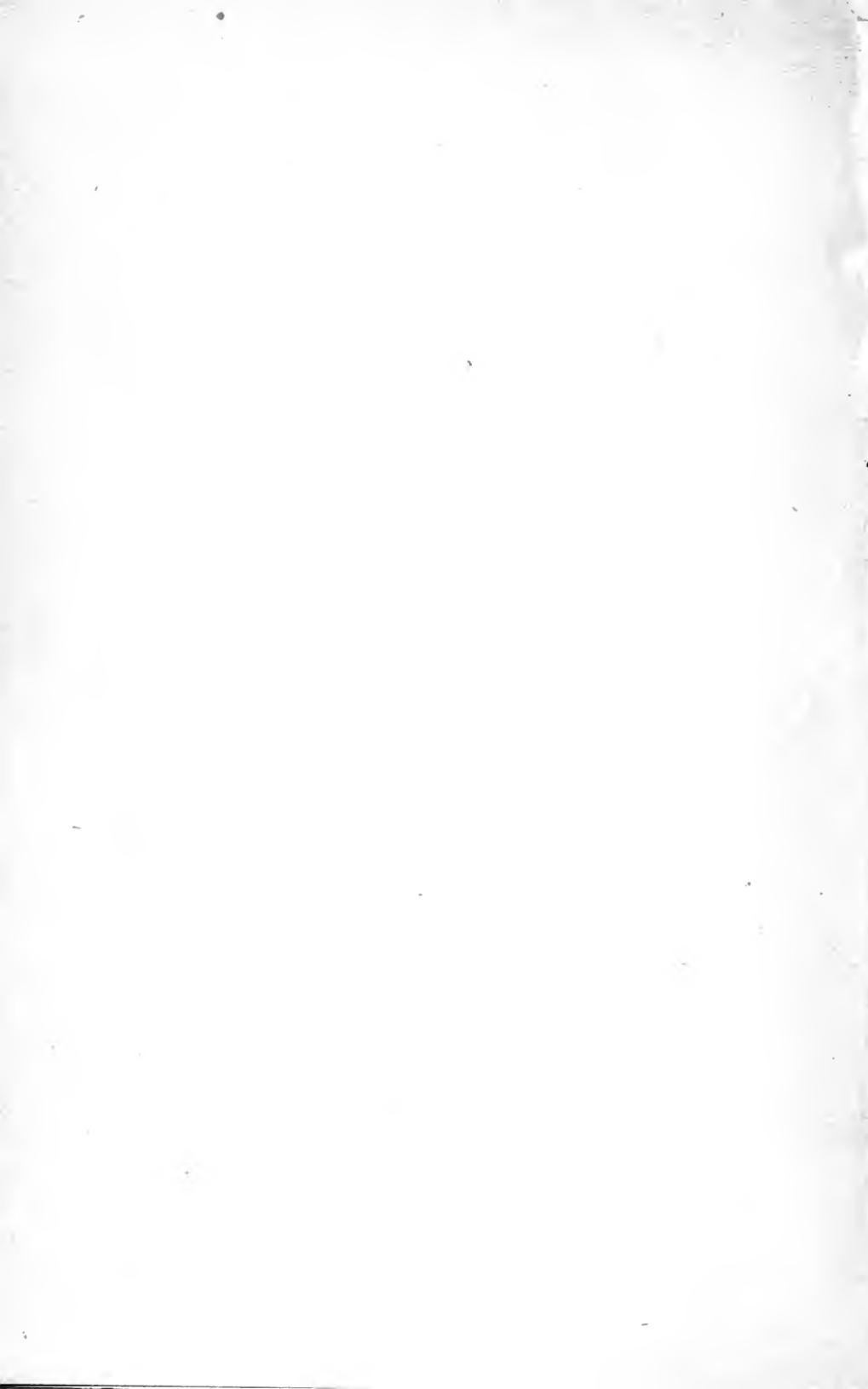
**H. T. SHERINGHAM**

*With Coloured and other Plates*

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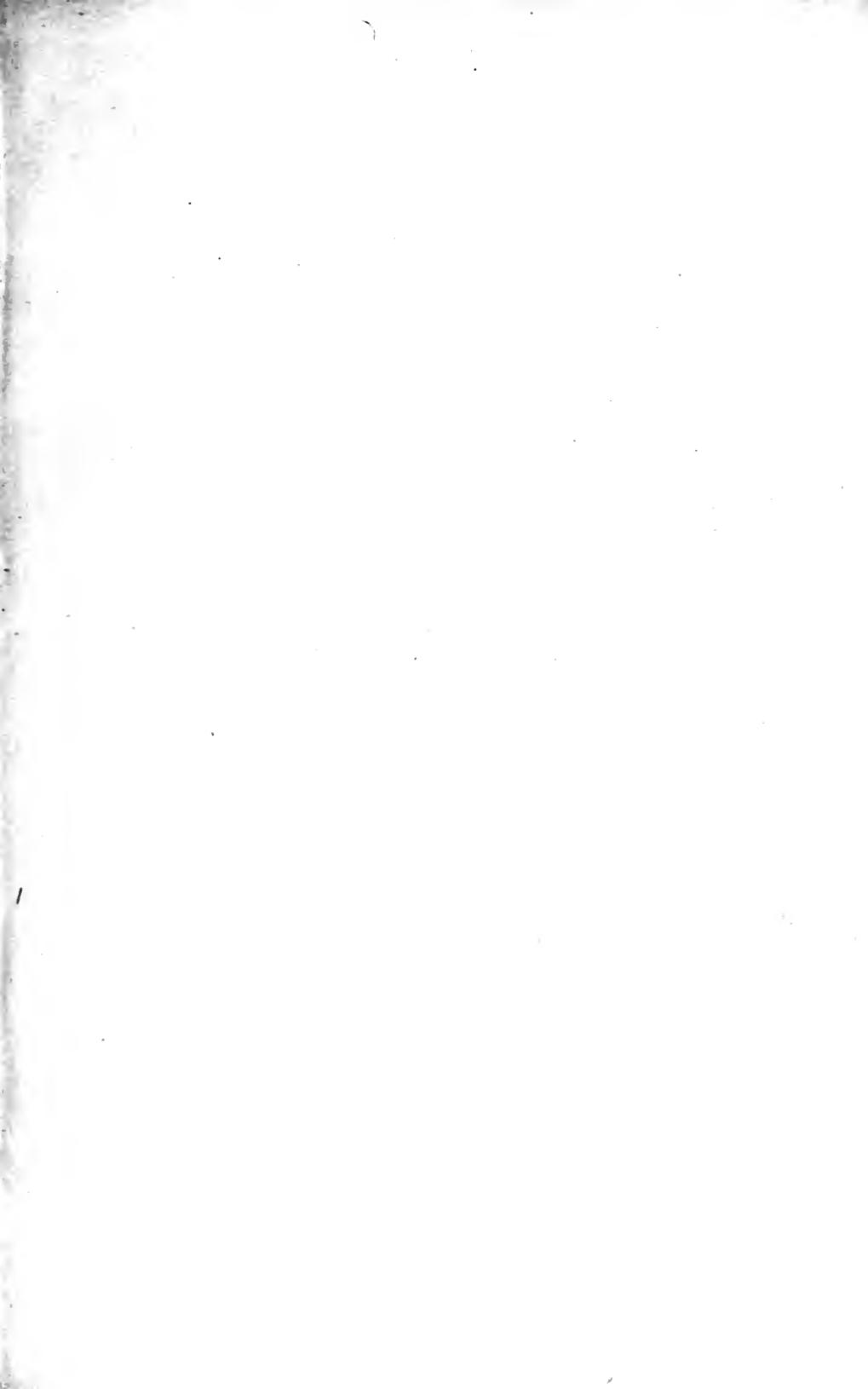
**DAYS AND NIGHTS OF  
SALMON FISHING IN THE TWEED**

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BURNING THE WATER

Wm. Simpson, del.

# **DAY'S & NIGHTS OF SALMON FISHING : IN THE TWEED :**

**WITH A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE NATURAL  
HISTORY AND HABITS OF THE SALMON**

BY

**WILLIAM SCROPE**

**EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION**

**NOTES AND APPENDIX BY**

**H. T. SHERINGHAM**

**ANGLING EDITOR OF "THE FIELD"**

**WITH THIRTEEN PLATES IN COLOUR  
AND SIXTEEN OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS**

Cincinnati

**STEWART KIDD COMPANY**

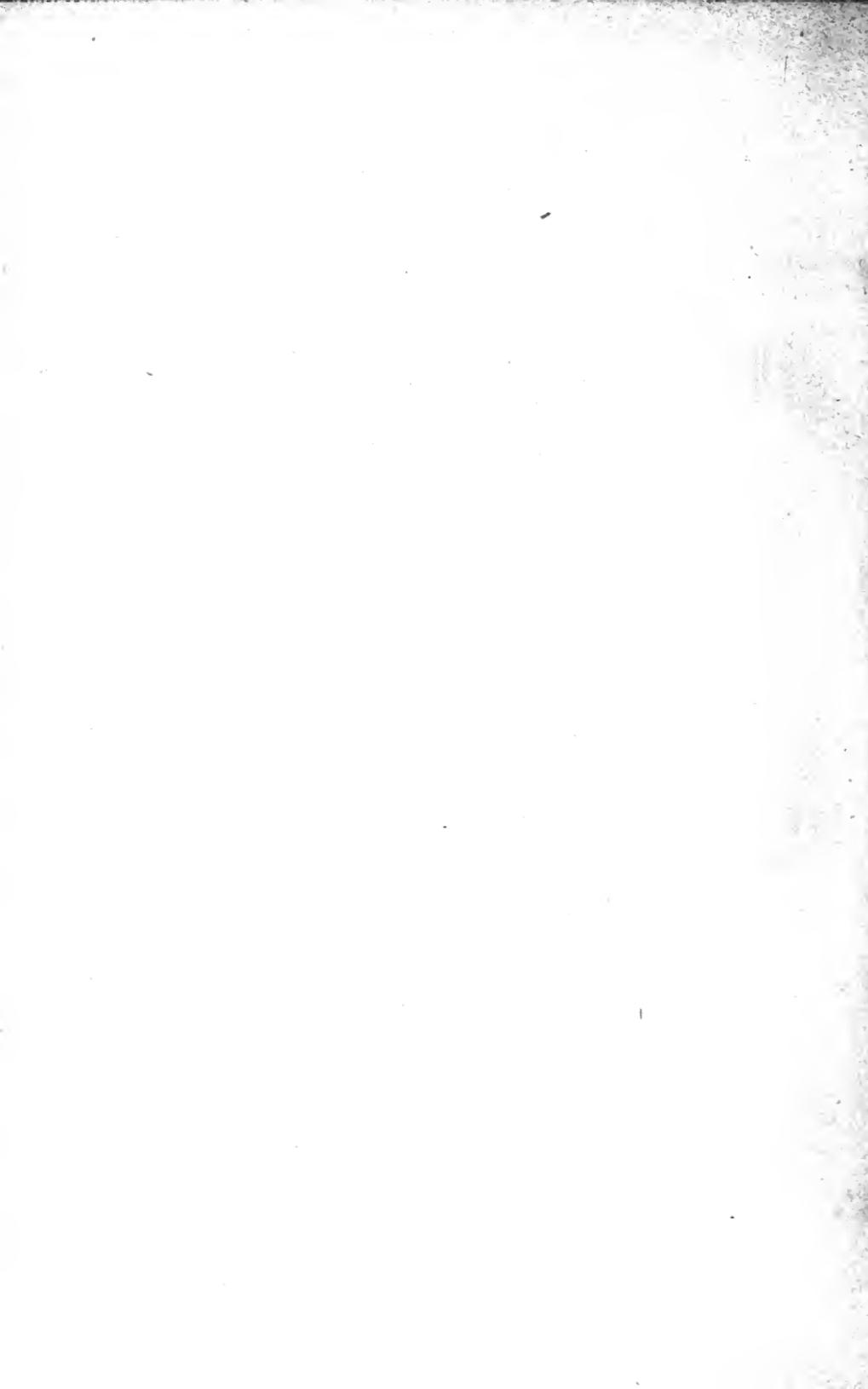
Publishers

" Let them that list, these pastimes still pursue,  
And on such pleasing fancies feed their fill,—  
So I the fields and meadows green may view,  
And daily by fresh rivers walk at will  
Among the daisies, and the violets blue,  
Red hyacinth, and yellow daffodil,  
Purple Narcissus like the morning rays,  
Pale gander-grass, and azure culver-keyes."

J. DAVORS.

SH 685  
S4  
1922

TO  
**THE LORD POLWARTH**  
THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE INSCRIBED  
IN REMEMBRANCE OF  
THE HAPPY DAYS SPENT IN HIS COMPANIONSHIP  
ON THE BANKS OF THE TWEED  
AND THE SOCIAL INTERCOURSE ENJOYED FOR  
SO MANY YEARS AT MERTOUN  
BY HIS SINCERE AND FAITHFUL FRIEND  
**THE AUTHOR**



## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

**I**N presenting a new edition of William Scrope's *Days and Nights of Salmon Fishing* to the angling community of the year 1921 one is a little doubtful as to one's attitude as showman. Should it be proud or slightly apologetic? There is justification for either alternative, but, on the whole, I am inclined to think that pride wins. For the book is a Classic, a great Classic, and it is, moreover, a Classic which it is now very hard to come by. The first edition of 1843 is a thing of price, of steadily increasing price, the second edition of 1854 is quite rare, and the only modern edition is over twenty years old and is now, I believe, out of print. So modern anglers who want a copy of Scrope have for some time been limited to the chances of the second-hand market, which are precarious. I am sure that they will welcome the opportunity now given to them of acquiring a copy by the simple process of walking into a shop and asking for it.

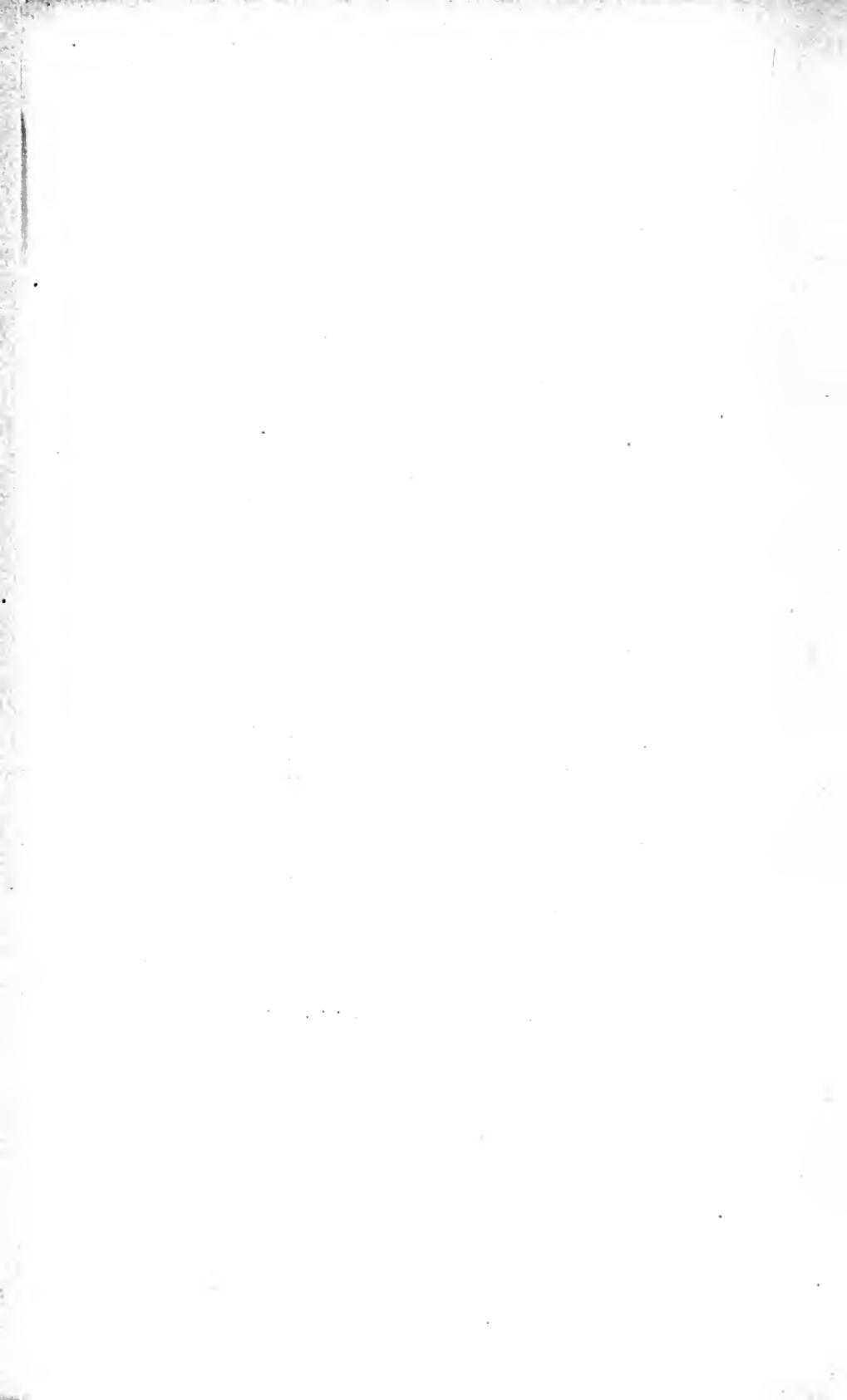
I have said that the book is a great Classic, which is rather a strong assertion, for the title may not be lightly conferred, especially on sporting books, which are, too many of them, apt to depend more on a bond of sympathy between author and reader than on intrinsic merit in themselves. I am not, however, inclined to modify my verdict on Scrope's volume.

It has defects, no doubt ; there are sentences in it that one could, perhaps, have remodelled advantageously ; some of its humours are, it may be, a little old-fashioned ; certain of its opinions are certainly eighty years old. Yet it is a "big" book. It has much of that spacious freedom which one finds in the great Elizabethans and the author is revealed as no unworthy scion of one of those fine old families which have played a part in history. The Scopes were men who counted in the development of the country, and our author, the last of the line, wrote with the fine gesture of a great gentleman. That, to me, is one of the most striking things about the book, and it gives it a character of its own which is found in comparatively little of our sporting literature.

Of course, the fine gesture is of little value without some definite literary ability, and this Scrope had in full measure. He was evidently a good scholar, with some knowledge of modern as well as ancient tongues, his reading was extensive, he could frame a well-balanced sentence, and, best of all, he had a delightful sense of humour. Some of the scenes in this book, such as the capture and display of Harry Otter's first grilse, will live for ever among the permanent contributions to English humour. They can pass the final test of constant re-reading. Then, of course, there is the technical interest of the book, which is very great. In some respects that interest is historical. We murmur "*Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis,*" when we read the chapter on salmon spearing or the injunction that salmon are



Boat, fish, leisters, and all the implements used in Salmon Fishing.  
(From a drawing by E. Cooke.)



to be taken "*recte si possis . . . si non quocunque modo.*" But in other respects the interest is fresh and topical. The way of a salmon with the fly in 1921 is just what it was in 1842, and if Scrope were to revisit the Tweed to-day he would surely find himself just as successful an angler, perhaps more successful, thanks to the later improvements in equipment. For the salmon is the same fish all the time. "*Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*"

Changes, of course, there have been, some of them for the better, some of them for the worse. On the whole, so far as the Tweed itself is concerned, I think the better predominates. All methods of poaching, for instance, are nowadays at any rate illegal, and, though they are not by any means obsolete, they are for the most part practised, so to say, with one eye over the shoulder, an attitude which must to some extent interfere with their efficiency. Watchers and bailiffs come in for a good deal of reprobation from people who know little of the difficulties and dangers of their work, but, on the whole, they are both brave and intelligent men, and they deserve the thanks of anglers. We hear a great deal about poaching which they have not prevented, but we hear very little about the raids that have not come off, the spawning beds which have not been disturbed, the passes which have not seen the furtive cleik. In the nature of things it is impossible for any river to maintain a big force of protectors, so, as matters are at present, some poaching is inevitable. That there is not more of it is a benefit which we owe to what bailiffs there are. There might be less than there is,

and that without the efforts of bailiffs, a consideration which brings us to the other side of the picture, and to the worse things that have befallen salmon since Scrope wrote his book. They are more evident on many other rivers than on the Tweed, which, on the whole, seems to have kept a sort of level for a good many years, thanks to the operation of its special Acts, but the Tweed has its share of them, since they affect every river in the country to a greater or less degree.

To understand properly the evils that beset the salmon we must consider the facts of the fish's existence. They may briefly be summed up in the statement that it feeds in the sea and breeds in fresh water. Unless it has free access to the salt water for the one purpose and to the fresh water for the other it must cease to exist. So far as we know at present man's varied ingenuities have not yet succeeded in altering the character of the sea pastures in which salmon acquire their substance, so there is no immediate problem to be solved there (though it would not be safe to assume that problems will not arise in the future), but there is no possible doubt that the fish's passage to the rivers and the breeding grounds is attended with constantly increasing obstacles which are directly attributable to man.

The first, and I think the worst, of these obstacles is pollution. Some rivers, such as the Thames and Trent, which used to hold salmon are now without them simply because at some part of their course they are too polluted for the fish to run up from or

down to the sea. The next evil—and it is hardly less serious—is the fact that in the estuaries or lower reaches of many rivers which still hold salmon there is so much netting that an undue proportion of the stock is killed off year by year, leaving too few for the reproduction of the species to the extent designed by nature. This netting takes special toll of the most valuable classes of salmon, those which run into fresh water in the early months of the year, and in too many cases leaves no chance to any except the late autumn class which runs after the netting season is over. Some rivers are said to be getting "later and later," which is merely a euphemism for "over-fished." Too many of them suffer from pollution and this over-fishing as well, and as a logical result they probably are afflicted also by undue poaching. The mere fact that the fish are scarce and late is an incentive to the countryside to take toll of them *quocunque modo*, as Scrope phrased it. Doubtless there is also operating adversely the better drainage of mountain areas, on which Scrope commented, with its result in a less equable waterflow in the rivers. Summer droughts and winter spates are now both more marked in character than they were in 1842, so things in that respect may be considered worse than ever. Altogether the situation in regard to salmon seems very bad, for the tendency as the stock grows less is for men to increase their efforts to catch what fish there are and so to gain a temporary benefit at the expense of the future.

Against all this, however, there is something to be

written on the credit side. In the first place, we have much more knowledge of the salmon than they had in Scrope's day. More is needed, but we have enough now to enable us to frame a sound policy in regard to salmon preservation, with the assurance that could it be put into operation without hindrance there would be ample supplies of fish to serve the markets, the needs of sportsmen—poor as well as rich—and the spawning beds. The salmon, in fact, instead of being a luxury, whether for food or sport, could be so multiplied that it would become a relatively inexpensive article of food and also a common inhabitant of our rivers available to sportsmen of all classes in due season. This fact would do more to solve the problem of poaching than armies of watchers, for legitimate angling has far more fascination than poaching when it can be prosecuted with some hope of reward. It would become the will of the majority, and that in the end prevails. At present the majority, having no particular hope or interest in the matter, is apathetic, and the preservation of salmon is left to the few. Their task is rendered none the easier because the fish, being scarce, is considered a perquisite of the rich, as indeed to a large degree it now is. So class-feeling is not absent from the problem, and poaching meets with a good deal of sympathy on that account. But if the fish were as plentiful as they should be they would no longer be the perquisite of the rich, and everyone would have a chance of a share in the sport and food provided.

The policy of salmon preservation now wanted may be quite briefly summarised :

First, pollution must be checked or neutralised. I am quite sure that science will soon be able to deal with almost any effluent, sewerage, industrial, or arterial (from tar-treated roads), so that it can be made innocuous to river life, and in that way a great part of the trouble will be removed without undue prejudice to important industrial interests. It is the duty of fishery preservers and anglers to urge on the men of science and to help them to the utmost of their power.

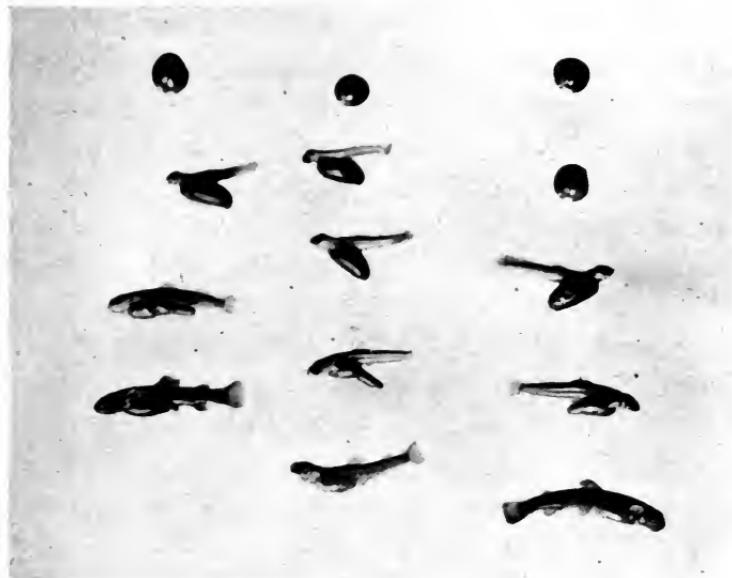
Next, an effort must be made to reduce the amount of netting in all rivers where the stock has fallen off. If possible all netting should be suspended for a term of years. This would involve capital outlay, but in the end it would be money well invested. We have a recent object lesson of what can be done in that wonderful river the Wye. By about 1900 the catch of fish to the nets, plied in both estuary and fresh water, had fallen to some seventeen tons, while the rod fishing was almost negligible. Then the Wye Fisheries Association leased the estuary nets, a bye-law was passed making fresh-water netting illegal, and the river received a three-year respite from netting everywhere. Since then the estuary netting has been resumed, but only so far as to pay the Association's expenses. The result is that the Wye has recovered all its old fame as a salmon river and more also. The 17 tons caught in the nets in 1900 meant about 3000 fish. By 1913 the rods alone were catching some 3500, and the restricted netting accounted for well over 6000, while the catch in the Severn nets had risen to 25,000,

largely as a result of the improvement of the Wye, both rivers sharing the same estuary. Besides all these fish plenty were left to reach the spawning grounds and provide for future years.

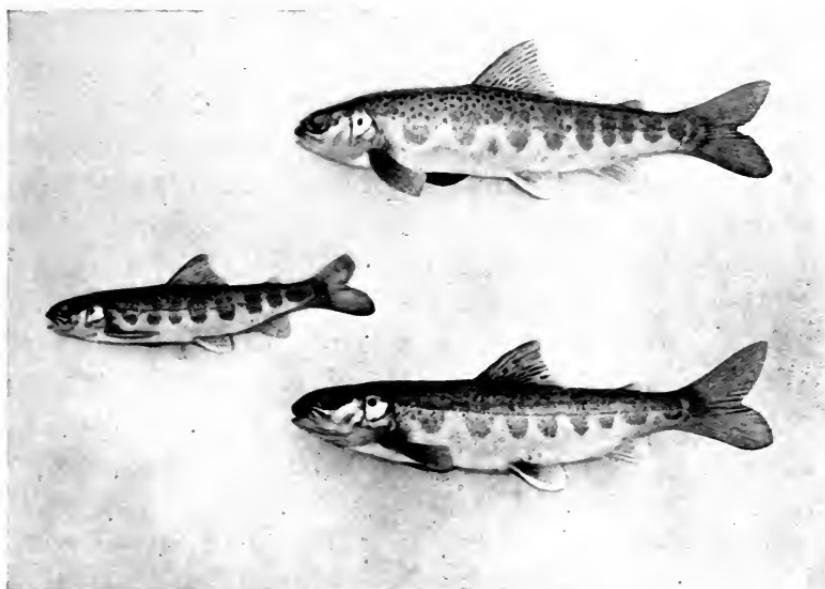
As I have said, our knowledge of the salmon has increased, and this has helped an understanding of fishery economics very much. Smolt-marking has taught us a good deal, and so has fish-culture, but the most striking modern development has been the science of scale-reading, which has enabled us to pronounce with a good deal of certainty as to the age of the fish and the main outlines of their life history.

The study of fish-scales was first undertaken by a Dutch naturalist, Leeuwenhoeck, in the seventeenth century. He worked on the scales of carp, which are less satisfactory than those of most fish, and his discovery made no noise in the world. Indeed it seems to have been practically forgotten (though I have found traces of it in eighteenth-century literature on microscopy), until the close of the last century when one or two men of science began to apply the method to coarse fish (in Germany) and to sea fish in this country. The pioneer of salmon scale-reading was Mr. H. W. Johnston, who published the first statement on the subject in *The Field* newspaper in 1904. Since then very important work has been done by Mr. J. Arthur Hutton and others, but Mr. Johnston has the honour of introducing the new epoch.

Scale-reading (aided by the confirmatory evidence afforded by fish-marking) has upset some of the old



Ova and Alevins showing absorption of umbilical sac.



Salmon Parr 4 months and 16 months old.



theories, but it has confirmed others, notably the view expressed by Scrope that the parr remained in fresh water longer than some people thought. The method of reading and the significance of the scale-markings are explained in the Appendix. Here it will be enough to state briefly the results of the study. They show that :

1. The parr remain in fresh water normally for two complete years before donning the silvery smolt dress and migrating to the sea. They may, however, migrate after one year, or remain in fresh water for three years or even four. Mr. Hutton believes that it is a question of nutrition, and he is probably right. Rich southern rivers like the Avon or Test enable parr to grow and develop more quickly than the barren hungry waters of the north. But the two-year period is probably most common in Great Britain.

2. Having gone down to the sea the fish may remain there for one, two, three, or even four years before it returns to spawn. This was a surprising discovery, for it used to be thought that the fish ran up every year, increasing in size between each visit. But now it is proved that even a 50-pounder may be what is called a "maiden" fish, that is to say one which has never been up to spawn before.

3. There is a proportion of fish which spawn more than once, more or less according to the old notion, but it is relatively small. In the Wye, indeed, Mr. Hutton has found that only 7 per cent of the fish examined had spawned before, and only a fraction of that fraction had spawned twice. Out of six

hundred and thirty-five fish that showed spawning marks, only two had spawned three times. The proportion of previously spawned fish may be somewhat higher in some other rivers, but not, I think, so much as to alter the general conclusions as to the habits of the species.

4. There is a striking variation in the growth of different fish. For instance, you may get a grilse ("grilse," or gilse as it is still called in parts of Scotland as it was in Scrope's day, is the name now given to the youngest migrants) which weighs 12 lb. and is about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years old, or you may get a fish of similar weight which has been a full year longer in the sea, and which, though no heavier, has developed into a more mature appearance and is an obvious "salmon" to the eye. And a great variation may be found in the weights of fish of the same age. This may be due to individual stamina, big smolts turning into big salmon, or it may be due to the superior luck of some fish in the matter of rich sea feeding. Probably both causes are at work in extreme instances.

5. Fish of the same family, so to speak, may have very different careers. Out of two fertile eggs deposited, say, in the winter of 1920, and hatched in the spring of 1921, one little fish might conceivably become a smolt in April, 1922, and return as a grilse in July, 1923. The other might not become a smolt till April, 1924, and then it might stay in the sea till March, 1928, so postponing its breeding for a good five years after its brother or sister. This instance probably represents the limit of variation, but lesser

intervals must be quite usual. It is a valuable provision by nature against the failure of any one year's run of fish or harvest of eggs. There will always be some fish in the sea ready for next year or the year after.

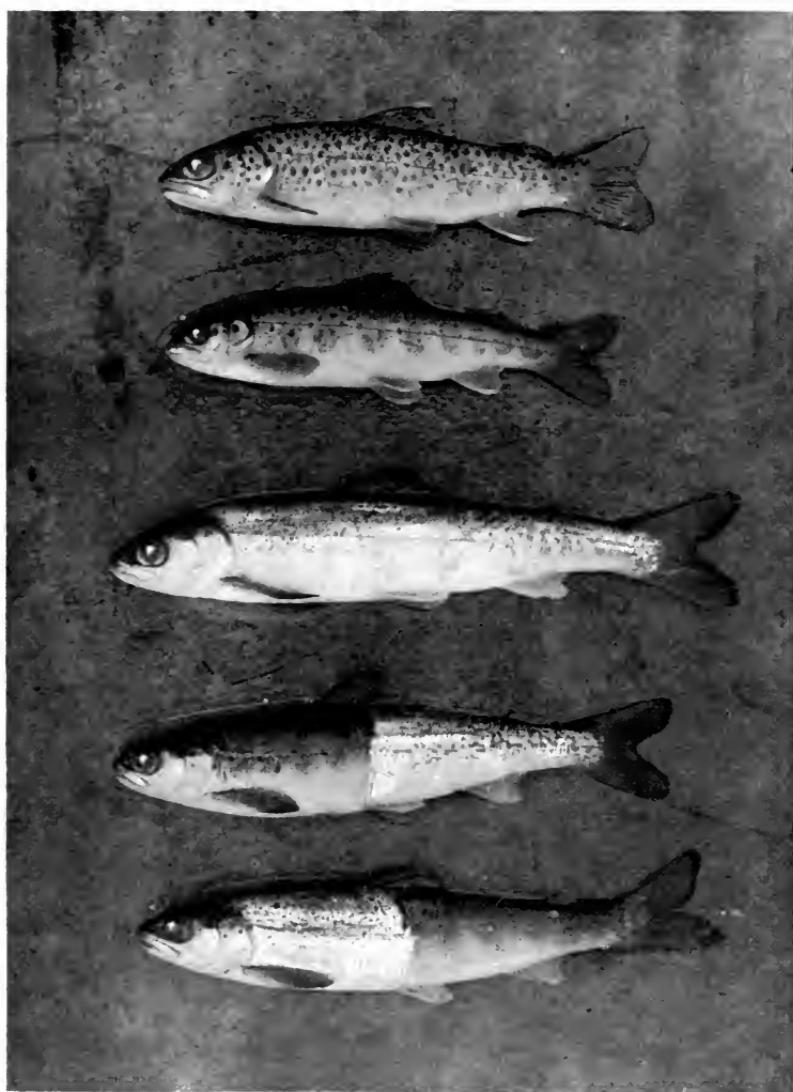
These discoveries obviously help to a clear understanding of the needs of the salmon and would enable conservators to frame sound provisions for its protection, provided that there were no outside hindrances. The new knowledge emphasises the importance of (*a*) assisting the breeding fish to reach the spawning beds, and (*b*) of ensuring the safety of the ova which they deposit there and of the little parr which are hatched out from those ova. If the majority of salmon only spawn once in their lives it is more than ever essential to enable a due proportion of them to do so successfully.

The position of the kelt, or spent salmon, seems to be raised by the facts just stated. Is the kelt worth preserving? The answer to this is, yes, because there is always the chance that it may return to sea, recover its condition, and return to the river to spawn again. A considerable number of salmon, especially of the male fish, die after the exertions of spawning, and it is probable that of those which do not die a fair proportion will spawn again.

The kelt brings us to the old yet ever fresh debate as to whether salmon feed in fresh water. Many anglers hold firmly to a belief that they do, and some are convinced that hungry kelts are as ravenous as pike. I think the latest and most informed opinion

may be summed up in the statement, applicable to kelts as well as clean fish, that "salmon will take food in fresh water if it comes to them easily, but they do not need to do so, and they do not *feed* in any regular way like fish which are permanent residents in the rivers." As we know, salmon rivers always contain plenty of other fish, especially trout and parr, which are small and well suited to be the food of big fish. When the shoals of salmon ranging from 5 lb. to 30 lb. are occupying the pools, hundreds at a time, what would happen to their small neighbours if they were seriously inclined to feed? There would not be a living fish of small size left anywhere near them. That consideration seems to me to dispose utterly of the theory that salmon, or kelts, "feed in fresh water." And if any further disproof were required there is the fact that at certain times an angler may spend weeks on a river which is full of salmon and utterly fail to catch any, though he tries every lure which ingenuity has suggested as likely to tempt them. I know that this is so from sad experience. There is none of the purely fresh-water fish, even the difficult carp, which would so utterly defy so much intensive effort.

Scrope has some remarks on the sea trout and bull trout, which in his day were supposed to be different species. Now the naturalists seem to be agreed not only that these two forms have no specific differences, but also that *S. fario*, the brown trout, is merely a third form of the same species. Differences in habitat and feeding presumably produce the



Trout.  
Parr.  
Smolt.  
Smolt scales removed.  
Smolt scales removed.

Note the respective sizes of mouth in trout and smolt.



differing marking and shape. It is to be noted that in New Zealand some of the acclimatised trout have acquired a definitely migratory habit, and they reach a size similar to that reached by the bull trout, which is often to be seen, though seldom caught, of a size of 20 lb. or even more. But it is somewhat local in its appearance, being most plentiful in the Tweed and other rivers of the north-east coast. So far I do not think it has been satisfactorily explained why the sea trout in one district should often reach 20 lb., and in another seldom exceed 5 lb. But a rather similar variation exists in the salmon of different districts, so the matter is evidently based on some natural law.

Scrope's book is closely identified with the river Tweed, and a few words on the Tweed of to-day seem to be called for. There have been changes, of course, especially in the modes of catching fish, but not so very many. Leistering and snatching and the killing of unseasonable fish are now, happily, illegal. The legitimate angling has not altered so much as on some other rivers because the fly still remains the principal lure employed. This is due to the fact that when the nets are off only fly-fishing is allowed. The flies themselves have changed for the brighter, as the plate (page 130) shows. Silver and gold bodies, golden pheasant toppings, jungle-cock cheeks, and other adornments make the modern flies vastly more attractive to the angler's eye. As to the fish—well, in some circumstances, I suspect that Meg in her Braws would please them just as well as a silver Wilkinson. But in others the brighter fly has greater

attractions. There is a note on this in the Appendix. When the nets are on, of course, Tweed anglers can employ the spinning bait, prawn, shrimp and worm, if they want to, just as do anglers on other rivers, so the many inventions displayed in modern catalogues have their interest for them.

As regards the catch of fish by the rods it is probable that the angling has not greatly deteriorated since Scrope's day. In 1920 the river had what was considered to be the best spring season in its annals, though the autumn fishing was not at all good. But the total catch of fish is very much less than it was early in the last century. In 1816, the record year, the netting return was 54,041 salmon, 120,596 grilse, and 62,074 sea trout. The average return from 1845 to 1849 was 8909 salmon, 39,409 grilse, 35,641 sea trout. From 1895 to 1899 the average return was 7366 salmon, 8458 grilse, 23,746 sea trout. This indicates a serious decrease in the total, though the salmon have not fallen off so much as the others. Pollution, the increased land-drainage (of which Scrope complained even in 1842), and the operation of the nets—all, no doubt, have played a part in the decline. Mr. W. L. Calderwood, who makes an interesting study of the Tweed in his *Salmon Rivers and Lochs of Scotland* (1909), is evidently inclined to think that the netting is the direct cause of it, though he speaks gravely of the pollution too. He is quite convinced that if the netting could be restricted the stock of fish would greatly increase, and that the Tweed, from being chiefly an autumn river, so far as the angler is concerned, would afford

spring fishing fit to compare with that of the Dee or Spey. I have no doubt that he is correct, and the spring fishing of 1920 is evidence to the truth of his theory. And the sport in an isolated year due to timely spates which enabled fish to get upstream in unusual quantities might become a regular thing.

Even should spring fishing become a feature once again, one hopes that the autumn sport would still go on, for it has qualities of its own which are very delightful. A crisp November day on lower Tweed when the glories of autumn colouring are at their height is one of the most enjoyable things the sport of fishing can offer. And it may provide wonderful sport, a bag of ten or a dozen fish to a single rod being within the bounds of possibility. There are not many other rivers which can hold out chances like that. It only shows what the Tweed might be if it were really taken in hand and developed to its utmost possibilities. It would probably fish well the whole season through, whenever the water was in condition.

H. T. SHERINGHAM



## PREFACE

“ **I** WILL write a sort of a Book on Fishing,” said I to my friend Mr. Lobworm ; when a fresh breeze from the gentle south swept over the meadows, “ stealing and giving odours,” and reminded me of the many calm and pleasant hours I had spent by the margin of some crystal stream.

“ You really had better do no such thing,” replied Lob.—He was a man of few words.

“ Your very polite reason, if you please ? ”

“ Why the subject is utterly exhausted ; ninety-nine books have been written upon it already, and no man was ever the wiser for any one of them, although many are clever and entertaining, and moreover abound in excellent instructions.”

“ Hold ! you forget dear old Izaak,” said I, “ whose dainty and primitive work, the emanation of a beautiful mind, has made many a man both wiser and better ; for it is dictated throughout by that wisdom of which it is written, ‘ Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.’ ”

“ Therefore it is,” replied Lobworm, “ that I would have you by all means to refrain : that book will always stand unrivalled and unapproachable. Excuse me, but ‘ ex quovis ligno non fit Mercurius.’ ”

“ Nay, nay, you cannot for a moment imagine that I shall attempt such a flight as that. I have read of Icarus, and also of the Ulm Tailor, who on

the first trial of his patent wings fell into the Danube, instead of pitching upon the opposite bank ; so, as I cannot touch the summits, I must perforce be content to creep on level lands—‘timidus procellæ :’—mine shall be a work quite of another character.”

“There is not the least doubt of that, I think,” said Mr. Lobworm. “Know likewise,” continued he (I never knew him so loquacious or so disagreeable before)—“know likewise, to thy discomfort, nay, to thy utter confusion, that a book has lately appeared yclept *The Rod and the Gun*, so amusingly written and so complete in all its parts, that there is not the least occasion for you to burthen Mr. Murray’s shelves with stale precepts that no one will attend to.”

“Pretty discouraging that, most certainly,” I responded. “And then we have *Salmonia* which is, or ought to be, a settler too ; and also a scientific work by Mr. Colquhoun, who touches deftly on the subject. But I tell you this, Sir Oracle, that although I see a hundred good reasons why I should abandon my design, yet I am resolved to persist : it is my destiny—that is a classical reason. You know that, to the great edification of our youth, the pious Æneas gives no better reason for the hundred rascally and much admired things he was in the habit of executing in his expedition to Latium.

“I only hope the public will be so good as not to be discerning ; because if they are, I shall have you, my most tender and amiable friend, eternally dinging in my ears, ‘There, did not I tell you so ? But you would not be ruled by me, so you must take the consequences.’”

At the end of this colloquy, and when left alone, I

began to reflect a little ; and although at first I could not help thinking my gentleman somewhat hasty, yet I came to the conclusion that he was partly, if not entirely, in the right. So I began to listen a little to reason, and contracted my plan, resolving to treat on *Salmon Fishing* alone, as it is practised in the *Tweed* ; for although various authors have written some pages on the sport, yet I am not aware that any one has as yet gone far into the subject, or given any precepts, or treated of the various methods available to the sportsman of killing these valuable animals in the rod-fisher's part of a river throughout *the whole of the lawful season*. This I have attempted to do in the following pages, having had more than twenty years' practice in that border river alone, above twelve miles of which I rented at different periods.

To the *Tweed* I have confined myself ; and I beg my readers to observe, that my remarks and instructions are meant to apply to that river alone ; and consequently that I am not accountable for what salmon choose to do in other waters, and for the different means that people may employ for catching them there.

Deer-stalking and salmon-fishing are at the head of field and river sports : having written what has been very generously received upon the first and best of these subjects, I have been encouraged to take up the other. This I have done the more readily, as I have been fortunate enough to bring to my aid the talents of artists, who are amongst the most eminent in their various departments that this country can boast of. I must not, however,

impute the landscape part to them : this it was unfortunately necessary that some one should undertake who was acquainted with the scenery, and I must hold myself in a great measure responsible for such portion of the plates.

It will be seen that in the letter-press I have attempted little more than to give a correct and faithful account of the manner and spirit in which the sport of salmon fishing is carried on in various ways where the scene is laid, and to bring before the sportsman the characters of such people as he is likely to fall in with in his excursions.

Among those whom I have taken this liberty with, as the type of his class, will be found the late Tom Purdie, Sir Walter Scott's faithful right-hand man, well known to the readers of Mr. Lockhart's delightful Biography, and the genuine parent of the stories here attributed to him.

Since the following pages have been printed, Mr. Yarrell has put into my hands *The Annals and Magazine of Natural History* for February, 1843, containing an account of Mr. Young's experiments on the growth of salmon. I have inserted an extract in the Appendix, for the benefit of those who are interested in the subject.

I hope I am correct in saying that, judging from the outline, my statements will agree with Mr. Young's experiments. This, however, will be more accurately seen when the Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh are published.

BELGRAVE SQUARE,

April, 1843.

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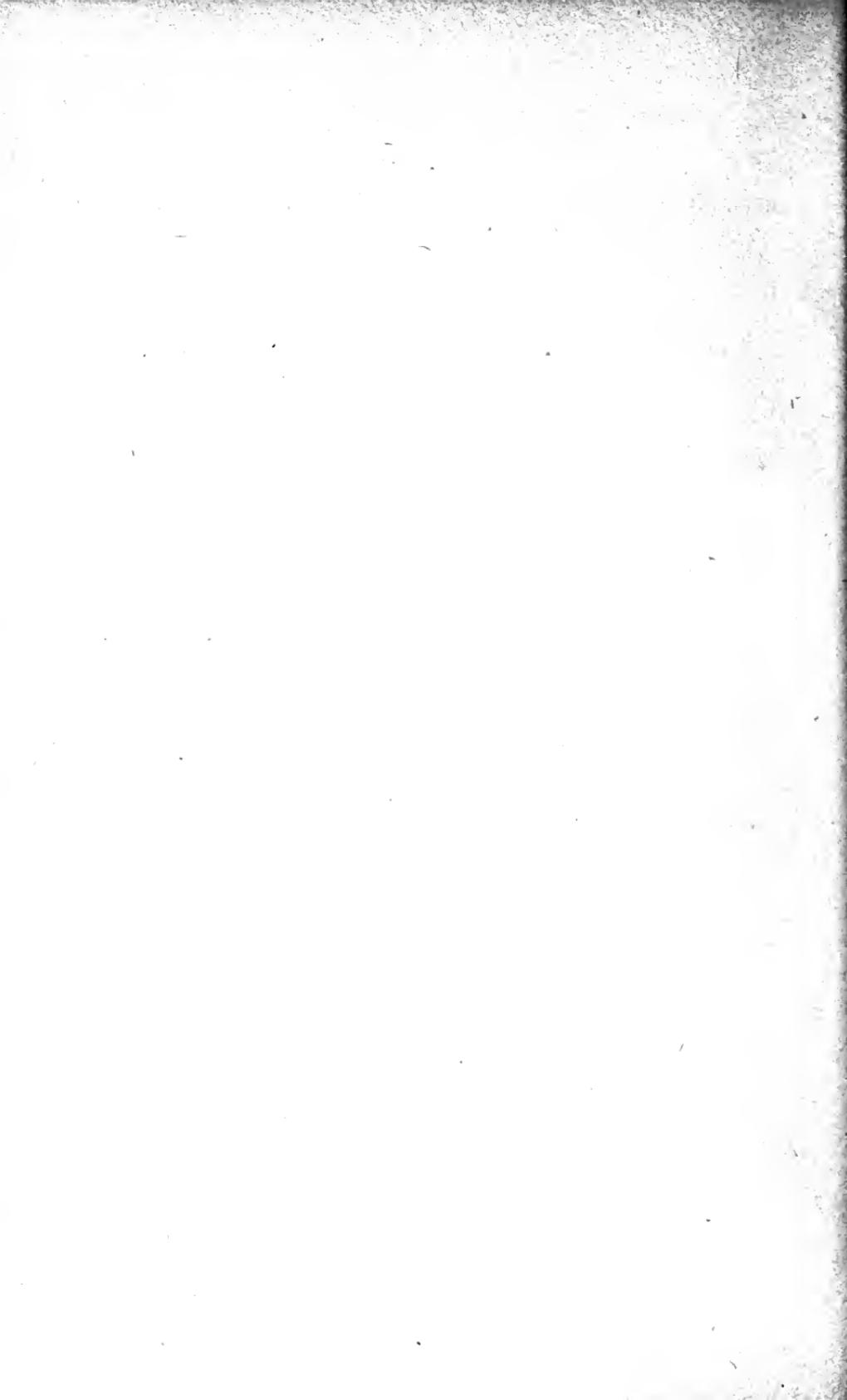
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# DAYS AND NIGHTS OF SALMON FISHING

## CHAPTER I

### CITIZEN ANGLERS

“ John Gilpin was a citizen  
Of credit and renown.”—COWPER.

SALMON fishers do not fall from the clouds all perfection at once, but generally acquire some skill in river angling for trout, and such like pygmies, before they aspire to the nobler spoil;—pretty work, indeed, would they make of it, if they began at the wrong end: *nemo repente fuit fishissimus*. We will venture to say, that many beginners have been frightened out of their wits by the sprightliness of a decent-sized trout: would they then have the presumption to encounter a salmon without fortifying their nerves with previous practice of some sort or another? I would advise each, one and all, to try their hands at something less powerful, before they throw their gauntlet at *Entellus*. In short, we ourselves, experienced as we are, stand in perfect awe of a salmon

## 2 DAYS AND NIGHTS OF SALMON FISHING

to this day ; and think it meet to approach him by degrees, by mentioning, in the first instance, the pursuits of less aspiring anglers, and their various grades of ambition. Thus, we shall show the strength of the passion for fishing, even of the most humble description, and by comparison set off the followers of *Salmo Salar* to the highest possible advantage.

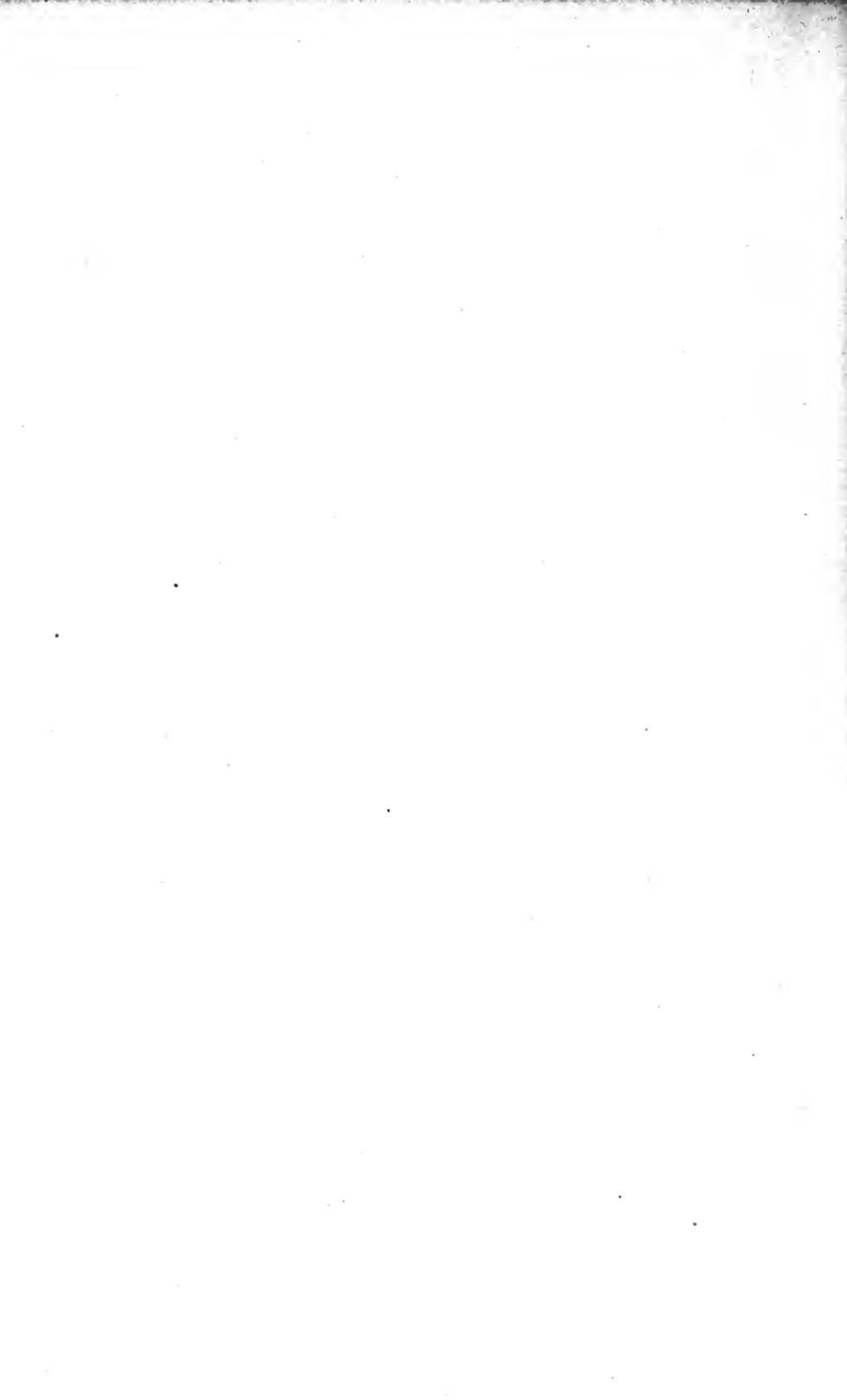
We omit giving any particulars of such holiday folk as disturb the puddles in the commons about London, and beg to introduce our worthy friend Mr. Pooley, who being counter-bound nearly all the year, takes his pastime occasionally on the river Lea. A pedestrian he, and a man of pretty considerable pretensions. Behold ! he casts aside his domestic garb disdainful, and packs himself up in a shooting jacket, which distinguishes him from the common herd of travellers, and becomes him admirably. Indeed he shows much address in the skilful use of its buttons ; and it is really surprising to see what an effect he produces by fastening the two last in the waist, thereby making the rereward of his person stick out in bold relief ; for Mr. Pooley is a man of a commendable rotundity. The short rod which he trails merrily in his hand, and the basket that irritates the vertebræ of his back, proclaim his high resolve. At early morn he quits the dusky city, with a temporary distaste for the sound of Bow bells, and with pity for such as are doomed to business whilst it is his pleasure to angle.

At length, behold him arrived at thy lazy waters, O Lea ! With joyous voice he evokes the miller ; orders a dinner, as he is pleased to suppose, of three

Photo. MacGregor, Kelso

RUTHERFORD WATER.





dishes, the principal one consisting of the fish he is about to catch, with Izaak Walton's instructions for cooking them. The miller generally puts on a somewhat distressing smile on this occasion, as the said dish of fish is rather addressed to the imagination than otherwise—food for the mind alone. Behold him now, seated on a spot which has long borne his name (*Mr. Pooley's Seat*). The story runs, that he once caught a pike there of five pounds ; but the truth is, that the said pike was actually only two pounds, but he added a pound to its weight every passing year, because he said that the fish would have gained as much had he lived up to the present day of reckoning. This was a mode of calculation that some even of his most intimate friends could not assent to, but he was always peremptory on the subject. His person now being fairly disposed on the bank, with his short and comely legs dangling over the weir, he becomes deeply intent upon his neatly painted float. On this his longing eyes are bent. He sees but askance the swallows that flit by him, and the willow that droops over the pool—he sees only his float. By Jupiter, it bobs !—now is the decisive moment. Prompt and energetic, he gives a scientific jerk, and up comes the light line obedient. Is there the semblance of a fish at the end of it ? O no, certainly not. What then made the float move ? Who can say ? Perhaps it was only a delusion of the optics brought on by a sanguine temperament, or a slight ruffle occasioned by the zephyrs that kissed thy Cockney waters, O gently slumbering Lea ! You were excited, Mr.

#### 4 DAYS AND NIGHTS OF SALMON FISHING

Pooley, you must own, dreadfully excited—and it well became you to be so, for the moment was awful ; but we will leave you to resume your tranquillity. We grant you our sympathy, but deny you our company.

Pass we on to the more ambitious angler, even to our adventurous acquaintance, Mr. John Poplin. He cannot submit to the worm, paste, or float—not he. His skilful arm is practised to wave his rod gracefully, with nothing less at the end of the line than the green granam fly. Reclining on his sofa, and tinted with a slight suffusion of bile, he has seen on one auspicious morn a seductive advertisement, headed "*Trout Fishing.*" With eager pen he responds to A. B. ; pays a guinea for a ticket to enable him to angle for trout during a whole season, in a part of the river Wandle that is strictly preserved. How very cheap ! After pulling about monstrous fish in his dreams all night he pays his guinea, and drives off to the Elysian fields : there he beholds the whole extent of the fishery lying before him—a mill-pond full seventy yards long, one side only belonging to the advertiser in right of a small water meadow. The spot seems a favourite one ; for a goodly company of citizens are extended along the bank in line at three feet asunder—a similar number on the opposite bank. Now three feet is a liberal allowance, for only two are granted for a soldier standing in close order. With graceful obeisance and skilful tact he apologises, and wedges himself into line ; hooks his neighbour's tackle on the right the very first throw, whilst he on his left hooks his.

They remonstrate, and extricate with proper courtesy. Not particularly admiring his position, which he deems crowded, he backs out, quits the ranks, and in evil hour trespasses on the water below. Then was thy wrath awakened, O jolly miller ! White in apparel, but rubicund in complexion, you sally forth, portly and irascent : lofty is your language.

"Who gave you toleration to fish in my mill tail ?" In return, Mr. Miller, you are called an uncivil brute, and you well deserve it ; for, in civility, you should first of all have remonstrated, and, in prudence, should afterwards have endeavoured to exact a handsome fine for the trespass. But you did neither of these ; on the contrary, I am sorry to say, you were personal and unpleasant, and forcibly deprived our amiable friend Mr. John Poplin of his rod ; so that he returned to London with an accumulation of bile, and scolded his wife, maid, and footboy. Hard was the fate of the caster of the green granam !

Mount we now one step higher, nay, a goodly stride or two ; and let us celebrate the real scientific fly-fisher, to whom fortune has been more propitious. Possessed of ample means, he roves from river to lake, rich in rods of various dimensions, and the joyful possessor of all the flies that have been named or engraved in all the ninety-nine books that have been published on the art of angling, not forgetting that distinguished fly called the *professor*. We have a boundless respect for this young gentleman. We like his custom of roving about. He does not scruple

## 6 DAYS AND NIGHTS OF SALMON FISHING

to mount his tilbury, and to flourish his rod over the rivers and lakes of Wales, and to lash also with zeal all the waters of Westmoreland and Cumberland. He is not a mere angler, but somewhat of an artist also ; at least he thinks so himself. So when the sun rides high, and the lake lies hot and motionless, “ and the flies make strange streaks, albeit skilfully thrown, on the mirror-like surface of the water,” as that most capital penman, “ the organist,” has described it, he plants his sketching stool in some shady nook, and, armed at all points with the necessary implements, imagines that he transmits to his canvass a vivid impression of what he sees before him.

Well skilled to select his subjects, he does not take a general view of the broad expanse, but gets a glimpse of the lake between the bolls of the trees opposed to it in shadow. Proud of his ultramarine, he touches in the distant mountain, and the rugged brae nearer the foreground he paints rich and sunny ; nor does he forget those accessories that give interest and character to the scene—the smoke issuing from the cottage lying in some shady nook, the boat hauled up on the gravelly beach, or the cattle that stand listless on some point of land that juts into the lake. Perhaps, too, some shepherd lies sleeping with his flock around him in a sequestered glade. Thus he paints the images of rural life ; and who happier than himself, when he retires to the clean little inn, and selects the trout for his dinner, giving a cut behind the dorsal fin to descry those of the reddest tint ? Self-complacent are his regards when

he eyes his ample capture—beaming are his looks when he contemplates his coloured canvass. It is with pain we take leave of the happy man : we would willingly write his memoirs, but we have a higher duty to perform. We are about to sing of Harry Otter, even of ourselves, doing battle with the lusty Salmon as we ride on the waves of the Tweed in our little bark, or wade amongst its rapid cataracts. It becomes us first, however, to preface our pages with a short description of the Salmon itself, as well as of Harry Otter ; and we will begin with the fish, as being the most interesting animal of the two.\*

\* The good-humoured fun which Harry Otter pokes at his citizen contemporaries gives a somewhat exaggerated but not wholly untrue picture of Cockney fishing of the day. The conditions of their sport (not, I expect, much changed by the lapse of nine or ten years) may be studied in *The London Angler's Book*, by John Baddeley, 1834. A walk of twelve or fourteen miles to the fishing and as many back seems to have been a common achievement. But fish were in those days to be caught in the Thames at Battersea, there was fine trout fishing quite close to London, and there were still rumours of salmon both in Thames and Lea, so things were not quite so bad as Scrope suggests. His description of the angler who wandered farther afield, sketch-book or notebook in one hand and rod in the other, accords very well with the impressions given by a good many contemporary books such as Medwin's *The Angler in Wales*, 1834, which displays all the required " meandering " of mind.—(ED.)

## CHAPTER II

" So dainty salmons, chevins thunder-scared,  
Feast-famous sturgeons, lampreys speckle-starr'd,  
In the spring season the rough seas forsake,  
And in the rivers thousand pleasures take."

DU BARTAS.

THE three species of the genus *Salmo* which are to be found in the Tweed, and which afford most sport to the angler, are the common Salmon, or *Salmo Salar*; the Grey, or Bull Trout, *Salmo Eriox*; and the Salmon Trout, *Salmo Trutta*. The *Salmo Fario* also, or common Trout, is, or rather used to be, in great abundance there; but of this latter species I do not mean to treat.\*

Although the salmon fisheries are of considerable national importance, affording a great supply of food and employment to thousands; yet, surprising as it may appear, the natural history and habits of the fish itself have almost up to this time been very imperfectly known. Indeed naturalists have been altogether mistaken as to the appearance of the fry, which at a certain growth they have supposed to be a distinct species of fish; and had

\* The modern scientific view is that *S. eriox*, the bull trout, and *S. trutta*, the sea trout, are one and the same fish. It is fortified by an inclination to regard the brown trout, *S. fario*, as merely another manifestation of a somewhat plastic species. For further observations on this point, cf. the Introduction.—(ED.)

it not been for the skill and diligence of Mr. Shaw, who has demonstrated this their mistake by a series of scientific and interesting experiments, they would still have continued in error. But not naturalists alone, who are apt to copy their predecessors with somewhat too liberal a faith, but even practical men, who have made their observations from nature, have arrived also at false conclusions.

Mr. Yarrell, in the second edition of his beautiful work on British Fishes, has given so ample and so scientific an account of the Salmon, deduced from the late recent and important discoveries, that little remains to be said on its natural history.\*

I shall therefore be as brief on this subject as possible ; adding, however, such remarks on the habits of the three most valuable species of the *Salmonidæ* as my practical acquaintance with the subject may enable me to supply.

And, first, for the

### COMMON SALMON

#### SALMO SALAR

GENERIC CHARACTERS.—“ Head smooth, body covered with scales ; two dorsal fins, the first supported by rays, the second fleshy and without rays ; teeth on the vomer, both palatine bones, and all the

\* *British and Irish Salmonidæ*, by John Day, 1887, *British Fresh Water Fishes*, by C. Tate Regan, 1911, *The Life of the Salmon*, by W. L. Calderwood, 1907, *The Life History and Habits of the Salmon*, etc., by P. D. Malloch, 1910, *The Sea Trout*, by H. Lamond, 1916, are other books which have more lately become indispensable to the student of the *Salmonidæ*. There is much also in the literature of the Scottish Fishery Board which should be acquired.—(Ed.)

## 10 DAYS AND NIGHTS OF SALMON FISHING

maxillary bones ; branchiostegous rays, varying in number, generally from ten to twelve, but sometimes unequal on two sides of the head of the same fish.”—*Yarrell.*

This splendid fish leaves the sea, and comes up the Tweed at every period of the year in greater or lesser quantities, becoming more abundant in the river as the summer advances ; that is, provided sufficient rain falls to swell the water to such an extent as will discolour it, and enable the fish to pass the shallows with ease and security. It travels rapidly ; so that those Salmon which leave the sea, and go up the Tweed on the Saturday night at twelve o’clock, after which time no nets are worked till the Sabbath is past, are found and taken on the following Monday near St. Boswell’s—a distance, as the river winds, of about forty miles.

This I have frequently ascertained by experience. When the strength of the current in a spate is considered, and also the sinuous course a Salmon must take in order to avoid the strong rapids, this power of swimming must be considered as extraordinary.

As Salmon are supposed to enter a river merely for the purposes of spawning, and as that process does not take place till September, one cannot well account for their appearing in the Tweed and elsewhere so early as February and March, seeing that they lose in weight and condition during their continuance in fresh water. Some think it is to get rid of the sea-louse ; but this supposition must be set aside, when it is known that this insect adheres only to a portion of the newly run fish, which are the best

in condition. I think it more probable that they are driven from the coasts near the river by the numerous enemies they encounter there, such as porpoises and seals, which devour them in great quantities. However this may be, they remain in the fresh water till the spawning months commence.\*

On the first arrival of the spring Salmon from the sea, they are apt to take up their seats in the rear of a scull of kelts ; at this early period they are brown in the back in the Tweed, fat, and in high condition. In the cold months they lie in the deep and easy water ; and as the season advances they draw into the principal rough streams, always lying in places where they can be least easily discovered. They are very fond of a stream above a deep pool, into which they can fall back in case of disturbance. They prefer lying upon even rock, or behind large blocks of stone, particularly such as are of a colour similar to themselves. They are not to be found all over the river like Trout, but only in such rough or deep places as I have mentioned ; it is therefore very necessary for a stranger to take out some one with him who is acquainted with the water he means to fish, for there are large continuous portions of almost all salmon rivers where no fish ever take up their seats. It is true that a very practised eye,

\* With all our added knowledge of the salmon I do not think that we yet have a satisfactory explanation of the early-running fish. The theory that fish run in January or February so as to reach the furthest spawning beds by October is not convincing. None of our rivers are long enough to need such a period of journeying. It is otherwise with the great rivers of the western slope of N. America where some of the Pacific salmons have to travel upwards for 1500 miles or even more.—(ED.)

which is well acquainted with water, needs little assistance ; but there are not many such nice observers.

At every swell of the river, unless a very trifling one, the fish move upwards nearer the spawning places : so that no one can reckon upon preserving his particular part of the river, which is the chief reason of the universal destruction of these valuable animals. Previous to a flood, the fish frequently leap out of the water, either for the purpose of filling their air-bladder to make them more buoyant for travelling, or from excitement, or, perhaps, to exercise their powers of ascending heights and cataracts in the course of their journey upwards. Of the nature of these spates, or floods, I will speak hereafter.

That Salmon will leap a great height I have read, and heard asserted continually ; but even the subdued account which Mr. Yarrell has mentioned, placing their powers of leaping ten or twelve feet perpendicularly, I hold to be beyond the mark. I have frequently watched their endeavours to surmount falls, and I do not think I ever saw a Salmon spring out of the water above five feet perpendicularly. There is a cauld at the mouth of the Leader-water, where it falls into the Tweed, which Salmon never could spring over ; this cauld I have lately had measured most carefully by a mason, and its height varies from five feet and a half to six feet from the level above to the level below it, according as the Tweed, into which the Leader falls, is more or less affected by the rains. Hundreds of Salmon

formerly attempted to spring over this low cauld, but none could ever achieve the leap ; so that a Salmon in the Leader-water was formerly a thing unheard of. The proprietors of the upper water have made an opening in this cauld of late years, giving the owner of the mill some recompense, so that Salmon now ascend freely. Large fish can spring much higher than small ones ; but their powers are limited or augmented according to the depth of water they spring from : in shallow water, they have little power of ascension ; in deep, they have the most considerable. They rise rapidly from the very bottom to the surface of the water by means of rowing and sculling, as it were, with their fins and tail ; and this powerful impetus bears them upwards in the air, on the same principle that a few tugs of the oar make a boat shoot onwards after one has ceased to row. It is probably owing to a want of sufficient depth in the pool below the Leader-water cauld, that prevented the fish from clearing it ; because I know an instance where Salmon have cleared a cauld of six feet belonging to Lord Sudely, who lately caused it to be measured for my satisfaction, though they were but few out of the numerous fish that attempted it that were able to do so. I conceive, however, that very large fish could leap much higher.

Although I think the powers of Salmon to leap perpendicularly have been much overrated, yet I know that they will ascend steep cataracts in a wonderful manner. Mr. Smith of Deanston, in the Carse of Stirling, has invented a sort of stair, by

## 14 DAYS AND NIGHTS OF SALMON FISHING

means of which Salmon are enabled to ascend streams in full waters in spite of natural or artificial obstructions. One side of the river under a weir or cauld is separated from the main stream, and intersected by transverse pieces of wood or stone, each of which reaches about two thirds of the width of the gap. There are two ranges of these steps, one on each side, and the steps on one side face the centre of the interval between the steps on the other ; so that the fish ascend from side to side in a zigzag direction, and can rest in their ascent, should they find it necessary. This is a very ingenious contrivance, and it has been constructed on the Teith, near Doune, with complete success. But I conclude it can only come into operation in such floods as raise the water to a higher level than is required for the mill-dam ; and therefore if rude steps of rolling stones were constructed at a portion of the back of the cauld, the end would be answered in a better manner, since the ascent might be made more gradual.\*

The fish pass every practicable obstruction till they arrive at their spawning ground, some early, and some late in the season. The spawning in the river Tweed continues throughout the autumn, winter, and beginning of spring. It commences about September, and I have caught full roeners as

\* The art of constructing salmon ladders has been considerably developed of late years, and there is a good deal of literature on the subject. There are few falls or weirs which cannot now be made accessible to salmon. Papers on various forms of pass have been issued by both the Scottish and English Fishery Boards and are to be obtained among the official publications.—(ED.)

late as May ; but the principal months are December, January, and February. Mr. John Crerar, who was fisherman to the Duke of Atholl for sixty years, and who left behind him some pages in manuscript on the habits of the Salmon, has recorded in them that fish full of mature roe may be caught in the Tay in every month in the year.

The fish become weak and wasted before the spawning time, and change in colour. The male loses its silvery hue, and is deeply tinged in the cheeks and body with orange, and is also dappled with red spots, when, in the upper parts of the Tweed, it is sometimes called a " Soldier." The under jaw also becomes longer, and a cartilaginous substance grows from the point of it, and extends upwards till it buries itself in the nose above. In this state the fish is very thin in the back, and altogether much wasted ; but its flesh is sometimes eatable, and at any rate infinitely superior to that of a fish which has newly spawned. The female, when ready to spawn, is dark in colour, and her flesh is soft and worthless.

Salmon are led by instinct to select such places for depositing their spawn as are the least likely to be affected by the floods. These are the broad parts of the river, where the water runs swift and shallow, and has a free passage over an even bed. Here they either select an old spawning place, a sort of trough left in the channel, or form a fresh one. They are not fond of working in new loose channels, which would be liable to be removed by a slight flood, to the destruction of their spawn. The spawning bed

is made by the female. Some have fancied that the elongation of the lower jaw in the male, which is somewhat in the form of a crook, is designed by nature to enable him to excavate the spawning trough. Certainly it is difficult to divine what may be the use of this very ugly excrescence ; but observation has proved that this idea is a fallacy, and that the male never assists in making the spawning place ; and indeed, if he did so, he could not possibly make use of the elongation in question for that purpose, which springs from the lower jaw, and bends inwards towards the throat.

When the female first commences making her spawning bed, she generally comes after sunset, and goes off in the morning : she works up the gravel with her snout, her head pointing against the stream, as my fisherman has clearly and unequivocally witnessed, and she arranges the position of the loose gravel with her tail. When this is done, the male makes his appearance in the evenings, according to the usage of the female : he then remains close by her, on the side on which the water is deepest. When the female is in the act of emitting her ova, she turns upon her side, with her face to the male, who never moves. The female runs her snout into the gravel, and forces herself under it as much as she possibly can, when an attentive observer may see the red spawn coming from her. The male in his turn lets his milt go over the spawn ; and this process goes on for some days, more or less, according to the size of the fish and consequent quantity of the eggs.

During this time, Trout will collect below to de-



A VIEW OF RUTHERFORD.

Photo Macgregor, Kelso



vour the spawn that floats down the river ; and numerous *Parrs*, so called, are always seen about and in the spawning beds—an explanation of which will be found in the sequel. If a strange male interferes, the original one makes at him, and chases him with great fury, and in these combats they often inflict great injury on each other. John Crerar once had his attention attracted by a great noise of dashing and plunging, at King's Ford in the Tay, and upon looking round he found it was occasioned by the fighting of two Salmon. After a short contest one of them set off ; and the water being shallow, Crerar fired at and killed him : he was a male of course, and weighed thirty-two pounds. This occurred in June, 1799.

When the female has done spawning, she sets off, and leaves the place. The male remains waiting for another female ; and if none comes in twenty-four hours, he goes away in search of another spawning place. In the spawning beds on the Tweed, great injury is done with the leister, and rake hooks ; and the fishermen, who know how to profit by their cruel slaughter, are in the habit of spearing the male which first comes to the female, leaving the latter as a decoy fish, and killing the other males in succession as they arrive to consort with her. By this barbarous and poaching practice all the largest spawning fish are destroyed, to the great destruction of the river. These foul Salmon are bad and unwholesome food, and used to be sold by the fishermen for about half a crown the stone, Dutch weight : they were afterwards salted. Trifling as this price

## 18 DAYS AND NIGHTS OF SALMON FISHING

is, the fishermen in the upper parts of the Tweed formerly made up the chief part of their rent in this manner ; for there is no law against killing foul fish, except in close time.\*

I have now given a brief account of the Salmon, from his first entry into fresh water till he has spawned. It remains only to trace him back to the sea.†

When the spawning is finished, the fish become very lank and weak, and fall into deep easy water, where they have not to contend with the current : here, after a time, their strength is recruited, when, as the spring advances, the strongest fish leave the depths and draw into the streams. At this time they become clear in colour, and are comparatively well-made ; but their flesh is soft, and without flavour.‡ They now move down the river by degrees,

\* "Unclean and unseasonable" salmon are now protected by law. The expression presents certain difficulties of interpretation, but it obviously includes kelts, and should also include fish which are very near the spawning time.—(ED.)

† One of the troubles in rivers with restricted spawning areas is that later-coming fish plough up the redds in which earlier fish have deposited their ova. This is probably a serious hindrance to the increase of salmon in some districts. It has lately been suggested in *The Field*, by Major Ashley Dodd, that redds, when they have been used, should be protected with pieces of wire-netting which could be pegged down in the bed of the stream or kept in position by heavy stones. They prevent other fish from disturbing the gravel. The suggestion is sensible and the plan should be easily put into practice.—(ED.)

‡ Now that it is illegal to kill kelts, the "comparatively well-made" fish of which Scrope speaks, now usually described as "well-mended," need a little caution on the part of anglers whose experience is not great. A well-mended kelt may be quite bright and deceptive, the more so as one sometimes comes across clean spring fish which are of decidedly lanky shape. The safest test of condition

in their passage to the sea. When they arrive in the deep pools where the water runs evenly, they lie in sculls, and take a rest for some days : here they are caught in great quantities by anglers, as they take the fly and other baits freely. March is usually the best month for this sport—if, indeed, it can be called sport to kill an animal that is worth a mere trifle, and resists but little. If there are freshes, the *Kelts* (for so the females that have spawned are called) quit the Tweed before the month of May, and the *Kippers*, or male fish, at the same time. Very many do so in March and April, according to the time that they have spawned and regained their powers. In going downwards they are taken about Kelso, or at least they used to be so in my time, with the long net, in pools where they rest, such as that below Kelso Bridge ; but they cannot be caught by the cairn nets, which are so destructive to them in ascending.

Having now despatched the Salmon to the sea, it remains to me to explain what becomes of the spawn, and how and when the young fry arrive at maturity ; and as there have been various doubts and contradictions on this subject, I think it more prudent to lead the reader to a consideration of the following pages, than to make a positive assertion on my own unsupported authority.

Mr. Shaw's ingenious experiments have lately had a very wide circulation ; but still I have thought it

is the appearance of the vent. In a kelt the orifice is always somewhat large and inflamed, showing signs of the recent spawning. In a clean fish it is small and free from redness.—(Ed.)

proper to make a very short abstract of them, as they are of too great importance to be omitted in any publication relating to Salmon.

Up to a late period it was universally thought that the spawn deposited as above mentioned was matured in a brief time, and that the young fry of the winter grew to six or seven inches long, were silver in colour, and went down to the sea in this state with the first floods early in the May of the coming spring. They were then called *Smolts*. In the summer months there are always multitudes of little fry in every salmon river, which in the Tweed are called *Parrs*, and have been thought to be a different species from the Salmon. I have formerly held several tiresome arguments, both with practical men and also with naturalists, with an intent to convince them that they were one and the same species.

The late Mr. James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, was particularly stiff and bristly in opinion against me. But he recanted afterwards, and caused to be published in the famed *Maga* an account of experiments made by himself, all tending to confirm my theory. I suppose it would have been better for my credit had I abstained from any colloquy with the said James, which appears not to have been particularly entertaining ; for lately, upon asking my friend Sir Adam Ferguson if he recollects the circumstance, “ Perfectly well,” said he, “ and it was at your own table ; but I cannot say who had the best of the argument, as I fell asleep soon after it began.”



Sir David Wilkie, *del.*

WORKING THE NET



But indeed I had not resided long on the banks of the Tweed, before I came to the conclusion that the Parr was not a distinct species, but, as I have said, was actually the young of the Salmon ; and very many years ago, long before Mr. Shaw's experiments, Mr. Kennedy having brought in a bill for the better preservation of the salmon fisheries, I wrote to him the following letter, which I transcribe from the first draught, which I preserved :—

“ PAVILION, MELROSE.

“ SIR,

“ Your Salmon Bill being in progress, permit me to have the honour of addressing you on a point that is at present overlooked, and that you will at once perceive is of vital importance to its successful operation.

“ It is a fact, that whilst the legislature has imposed penalties for the destruction of Smolts or Salmon fry, not only those whose duty it is to put the law in force, but the public, and even fishermen themselves, cannot ascertain what these are at all seasons of the year. On the contrary, for most part of the year they go by the name of Parrs, and are destroyed daily with impunity, and in incredible quantities. Hitherto the Parr and the Smolt have been considered as different species ; but that they are precisely the same, I think may be demonstrated.

“ The received opinion, and that which the present law of Scotland acts upon, is, that the Salmon fry of the winter and spring congregate and go down to

the sea in the May of the same season, and that they are of a pure silver colour, as indeed more or less they are. Now in all salmon rivers Parrs are to be found in abundance throughout the summer, and early in the spring ; and in the summer they are not of a silver colour, but marked with red spots, and are shaded with vertical bars on their sides at intervals. From the appearance of these bars, they are very generally supposed to be of a distinct species from the Smolt. Permit me to give my reasons for entertaining a contrary opinion.

“ After May the large Parrs totally disappear, and such few as may be found afterwards are very small ; but as the summer advances they become larger, and in the spring following the bars and red spots above mentioned gradually die away, and a stronger armour or scale supervenes ; and as that is more or less advanced in growth, the bars and spots are more or less visible.

“ When they are in this silvery state, that is, when the new scales are perfected, they become what are called Smolts or Salmon fry ; but by removing such new scales, you will find the bars and spots of the Parr underneath as clear and vivid as ever. I have therefore a positive conviction that the Salmon fry, instead of falling down to the sea the same year they are produced, remain in the river, under the name of Parrs, till the year following.\* That they increase little in size we cannot be sur-

\* Mr. Shaw has since proved that they remain in fresh water still longer.

prised at, as it is universally known that the Salmon himself wastes from the moment he comes into fresh water.

" If the Committee make themselves perfectly acquainted with the natural history of the Salmon, they will be aware of the peculiar construction of the eye of that fish. Dr. Brewster† has been so obliging as to examine for me the eyes of some Parrs, which I sent him for that purpose ; and replies, ' I have examined very carefully the crystalline lenses of the Parr, which I find to be the same with those of the Salmon, which is a strong confirmation of your opinion.'

" I must add, that these Parrs, as they are called, are never found but in salmon rivers, or in such as have an uninterrupted communication with them ; and that they cannot be the young of the Bull Trout, as the formation of the tail in that fish is wholly different.

" When it is considered that trout fishing is enjoyed by every class of people in Scotland, and that, speaking with reference to the river Tweed only and its different tributary streams, hundreds and hundreds of people are trouting daily, and that each person catches several dozen Parrs in a morning, except in that interval between the disappearance of the old fry and the appearance of the new in a forward state, it will be found that the young Salmon (for such I contest they are) so destroyed will amount to considerably more than the whole marketable produce of the river.

\* Now Sir David Brewster.

“ By your present bill I know not how far the local Scotch Acts may be repealed ; but I take the liberty of suggesting that it would be for the public benefit if the usage of a pout net in close time were made punishable by a fine. The inhabitants of almost every cottage have these nets, which are taken out under pretence of catching Trout, which no one but a proprietor has a right to do in such a way. I have heard that above a thousand Salmon have been taken in a small space of the Tweed by these nets during close time. They are most destructive below the backs of caulds, where the fish collect in order to ascend.

“ I should have mentioned before, that what we call the Parr in the Tweed goes by various other names in the different rivers of Great Britain, which is a material circumstance to note.

“ If you are desirous of any further information on this subject, I shall most readily give you such as may be in my power. What I have already said is of a nature that cannot make me be suspected of having any private or party view to answer.

“ I have the honour to be,” etc. etc.

The above being the first draught, I omitted to put a date to it ; but it was written many years before Mr. Shaw’s experiments. For Mr. Kennedy’s bill, to which my letter alludes, was brought in on the 15th of April, 1825, and thrown out on the second reading.

I received a very obliging answer from that gentleman, the purport of which was to say, that as his bill

had failed, it was not necessary to trouble me any farther on the subject.

This letter contains evidence that Sir David Brewster's experiments were made previously to its being written ; and when I had thought of publishing, being desirous to know the exact time when they were made, I wrote to Sir David to call his attention to the subject. His answer, dated 16th of April, 1840, was as follows :

"I am pretty sure that my experiments on the structure of the crystalline lens of the *Parr*, which is identical with that of the Salmon, were made previous to 1828.\* I remember well your stating to me that when the silver scales of the young Salmon (which in Roxburghshire we call Smouts) were carefully rubbed off, the colours of a darker hue which characterise the Parr were invariably and distinctly seen. I think you showed me the experiments, but I am not sure of this. With the view of confirming this your theory, or of overturning it, I mentioned to you that the fibres of the lens of the salmon," etc.

Then follows the account of his experiments, as detailed a little farther on.

Besides the reasons mentioned in the above letter, there were other causes which influenced me in the opinion I had formed ; the two principal of which were—

\* The date of Mr. Kennedy's Bill, *which I have but just ascertained*, proves that they were made in or before the year 1825 ; whereas Mr. Shaw's first account of his interesting experiments appeared in the *New Edinburgh and Philosophical Journal* for 1836, Vol. XXI, p. 99—eleven years after.

Firstly, That no one ever saw a clear silver-looking fry below the usual dimensions of those which are ready to go down to the sea ; that is, till the new dress comes over them, and obliterates the distinguishing marks of what is called the Parr.

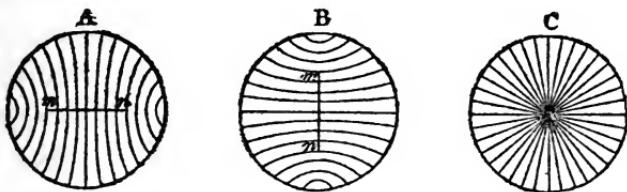
Secondly, That Parrs are found above falls which Salmon can, but they cannot possibly, surmount.

A high spate might certainly bring some of these falls more to a level ; but it would be as impossible for a Parr to swim up them in a raging flood, as it would be for the sere leaf that falls into the waves to find its passage upwards. Mr. Shaw, who has carefully watched shoals of *Parr* (correctly speaking, *Smolts*) in their descent to the sea, affirms that they pass down the current with the greatest caution, keeping their heads up the stream, and rowing gently with their fins against it, so as to steady themselves and prevent a too rapid descent ; and thus they drop down by degrees, tail foremost, precisely in the same manner that we manage a boat in the Tweed when descending the rapids.

When the fry were congregating in May I caught these little fish in various stages of the growth of the new scale. In some it had supervened so as to obliterate the bars and spots entirely, when their sides became silver ; in others they were partially obliterated, so as to leave only a mere stain of colour ; whilst some retained them almost entire. As I caught these fry I sent them up to Sir David Brewster, who was then residing at his beautiful place on the banks of the Tweed. After a careful examination he could find no distinction in the structure of the

organs between any of these little creatures, however differing in colour.

The Salmon has a peculiar formation of the eye, the crystalline lens having the fibres of which it is composed arranged as in the annexed sketch A, the line *m n* being horizontal on one side, and vertical on the other ; whereas in many of the Trout species the fibres are arranged as at C, crossing one another, or rather meeting at two opposite poles, like the meridians of a globe, the line joining the two poles being the axis of vision of the eye.



"After examining the lenses of the *Parr* you sent me," says Sir David Brewster in a letter now before me, "I found the structure to be exactly the same as that of the *Salmon*. I have frequently had occasion to mention the proofs that you gave me of the identity of the *Parr* with the *Salmon*, and to mention my own experiments on the lenses as confirmatory of your opinion that the *Parr* and the *Salmon* are one and the same species."

Salmon begin spawning as early as September, and continue to do so throughout the winter months ; December, January, and February being the principal ones for that operation. They continue on the spawning ground, or Rade, as it is termed in Scotland, also during the spring months, though in

diminished quantities. I myself have caught full roeners, as they are called, in the month of May in the Tweed. Now we know from the proof of experiments that have been made by various persons, that the spawn of the Salmon continues imbedded in the gravel from ninety to one hundred and fifteen days, according to the temperature of the water, before it vivifies ; and indeed remains there some weeks after its exclusion from the egg. Mr. Shaw has stated the exact time of this latter period to be fifteen days ; at the end of which time, says he, the egg which was attached to its abdomen, from which it derived its nourishment, "contracted and disappeared ; the fin or tadpole-like fringe also divided itself into the dorsal, adipose, and anal fins, all of which then became perfectly developed ; the little transverse bars, which for a period of two years characterise it as a Parr, also made their appearance ; so that a period of at least 140 days is required to perfect this little fish, which even then measured little more than one inch in length."

The above not being matter of conjecture, but having been demonstrated by experiment, how by any possibility can the old doctrine be true, that the fry which go to sea about the first or second week in May, six or seven inches long, can be the spawn of the winter immediately preceding it ? And what and where are the young of the Salmon all the summer, if they are not indeed Parr ; for no silver-coloured fry are at that time to be seen in the river ? I must add also, that it is incumbent upon those naturalists who assert that the Parr is a distinct

species, to prove that it is so from comparative anatomy. But they have not been able to do this ; on the contrary, as far as I can learn, they confess they have discovered no variation of organic structure.

I have heard it objected that the growth of the Salmon being very rapid, it seems out of the order of nature to suppose that a creature should remain so long in fresh water with so little increase of size. But Salmon never grow in fresh water ; on the contrary, they begin to waste from the moment they enter a river, whether they are clean at that period, or forward in spawning. Besides, as the full latitude of the spawning season endures for six months, some of the fry, acknowledged by all to be Smolts, must be six months older than others, and yet when they congregate to go to sea they will all be found to be nearly of the same size. Now if the fry, confessed by all to be Smolts, or the young of the Salmon, do not increase during so many months, why should it be objected that the Parr is not the young of the Salmon on the same account ?

These and other arguments have occurred to me from time to time. All reasoning, however, on this subject is now become superfluous ; Mr. John Shaw of Drumlanrig having demonstrated, by a number of careful and scientific experiments, that the Parr is actually the young of the Salmon. His first paper, announcing this important fact, was published in the *Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal* for July, 1836, Vol. XXI, page 99. His second was read before the Royal Society of Edinburgh on the 18th

of December, 1837, and was published in the *Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal* for January, 1838, Vol. XXIV, page 165. His third and concluding communication, by far the most interesting, and which has been lately received by the Royal Society of Edinburgh, contains a continuance and confirmation of the results of the experiments mentioned in the two first papers above alluded to, together with the very extraordinary fact, that the milt of a Parr eighteen months old, and only weighing an ounce and a half, is capable of impregnating the ova of a full-grown Salmon.

Before proceeding to make the experiments related in his last communication, he made three ponds, the banks so raised, and constructed otherwise in such a manner, that it was impossible for the young fish to escape, or for any other fish to have access to them. Accurate drawings and descriptions of these ponds are given in his printed pages, now before me, which he was so obliging as to present me with. "Being thus prepared," says Mr. Shaw (alluding to the construction of his ponds), "with every means of carrying my experiments into practice, I proceeded to the river Nith on the 4th of January, 1837, and readily discovered a pair of adult Salmon engaged in depositing their spawn. They were in a situation easily accessible, the water being of such a depth as to admit of my net being employed with certain success." The fish were accordingly captured by means of a hoop net. The ova were then pressed with the hand from the body of the female, and impregnated in the same manner

by the milt of the male, and the spawn in this state was transferred to a private pond previously prepared for its reception. That there might be no doubt as to the species, the skins of the parent Salmon were kept, and may be seen at any time.

On the 28th of April, 114 days after impregnation, the young Salmon were excluded from the egg, which was not the case when they were visited the preceding day. On the 24th of May, twenty-seven days after being hatched, the young fish had consumed the yolk which remains attached to the lower part of the body, and which serves him for nourishment, and the *characteristic bars of the Parr had become distinctly visible*. From a deposition of mud, as Mr. Shaw apprehends, all these fry, except one individual, were found dead at the bottom of the ponds, so that there was no opportunity of watching their future progress ; but an ingenious experiment was made, which proved that an increased temperature hastened the development of the infant fish.

But we shall see that Mr. Shaw was too indefatigable to be daunted by such an untoward accident, and that he persevered in his experiments, till his efforts were rewarded by complete success.

On the 27th of January, 1837, he captured a male fish of sixteen pounds, and a female of eight, and expressed the ova of the female and impregnated it with the milt of the male in the manner above related, and deposited the spawn in this state in a private pond as before, and to which no fish could by possibility have access.

" On the 21st of March," says Mr. Shaw (that is,

fifty-four days after impregnation), "the embryo fish were visible to the naked eye. On the 7th of May (101 days after impregnation), they had burst the envelope, and were to be found amongst the shingle of the stream. The temperature of the water was at this time  $43^{\circ}$ , and of the atmosphere  $45^{\circ}$ ; and it is this brood which I have now had an opportunity of watching continuously for a length of time, that is, for more than the entire period which was required to elapse from their exclusion from the egg, until their assumption of those characters which distinguish the undoubted Salmon fry."

Mr. Shaw then proceeds to describe the size and appearance of the Salmon fry at different periods of their age, accompanied with several very accurate and well-executed engravings illustrating the text. "One of these is a specimen *two years* old, when it has assumed its migratory dress, and measures about six inches and a half, being about the average size of the brood." *Two years*—mark this—and only six inches and a half long ! It then goes to the sea the first floods in May, and returns in two or three months, as it may happen, when it is called a Gilse, and is increased to the size of from four to seven pounds, and indeed very considerably more, being larger or smaller in proportion to the time it has remained in the sea. A second visit to the sea gives it another increase, when it returns to the river as a Salmon. This appears so wonderful and extraordinary a departure from the general laws of nature, that it is no wonder that the most scientific men have been misled.

But if the Salmon fry attain but to such pigmy growth in fresh water, still less is that element favourable to adult Salmon, which, as I have elsewhere observed, fall off in size and condition from the moment they enter a river for the purpose of spawning. When they have spawned, however, they certainly do mend greatly in condition, or, more correctly speaking, recover from their state of weakness.

But to return to Mr. Shaw. "The circumstance," says he, "of male Parrs with the milt matured, and flowing in profusion from their bodies, being at all times found in company with the adult female Salmon while depositing her spawn in the river, and the female Parrs being in every instance absent, suggested the idea that the males were probably present with the female Salmon at such seasons for sexual purposes.

"To demonstrate the fact," he continues, "in January, 1837, I took a female Salmon weighing fourteen pounds from the spawning bed, from whence I also took a male Parr weighing one ounce and a half, with the milt of which I impregnated a quantity of her ova, and placed the whole in a private pond; where, to my great astonishment, the process succeeded in every respect, as it had done with the ova which had been impregnated by the adult male Salmon, and exhibited, from the first visible appearance of the embryo fish up to their assuming their migratory dress, the utmost health and vigour.

"The result from this experiment was of so start-

ling a nature, that it was not thought prudent to give it publicity till the trial was repeated. It was so, early in the following January, 1838, when two lots of eggs of a Salmon, weighing eighteen pounds, were impregnated with the milt of two male Parrs, and there ensued precisely the same result as before. Again, in December, 1838, four lots of ova from an adult Salmon were impregnated with the milt of four Parrs with similar success ; and the same Parrs, being afterwards placed in a private pond, assumed the migratory dress in the following May, not in the most minute degree differing from what in the Tweed are universally called Smolts, and are acknowledged by all to be the young of the Salmon."

All these experiments appear to me to be quite conclusive, and of a nature to satisfy any one who has not pledged himself to an opposite theory. But if any thing were still wanting, it has been completely supplied by an additional experiment, which clenches the proof.

On the 4th of January, 1837, a male Parr, *itself the produce of a male Parr and female adult Salmon*, was made by expression of the milt to impregnate the eggs of a Salmon weighing twelve pounds ; and for the better security of the lot the whole was placed in a wooden trough, over which a sheet of fine copper wire-gauze was fixed. The trough was then placed in a stream of water previously prepared for its reception, and the results were precisely of a corresponding nature to those already detailed.

Now, if the Parr and the Salmon were distinct species, their produce would be hybrids, and would

not, therefore, breed again, according to the rules of nature established to prevent the confusion of different species by a conservative law ; but this last and most important experiment has proved that the produce from the male Parr and female adult Salmon will breed again with the old Salmon, and therefore that such produce are not mules, but of the same species with their parents.

In a letter to Mr. Shaw, written in the spring (1840), I suggested to him to impregnate the ova of the Salmon with the milt of the common river Trout, imagining that the produce, if any, might be what is called in the Tweed the Bull Trout, which exactly resembles in outward appearance and general size what one would conceive such a process would create.

I learn from Mr. Shaw's last paper that he has succeeded in breeding the Sea Trout by artificial impregnation with their own species ; so that the produce of this cross, that is, of the River Trout and Salmon, cannot be the Sea Trout of the Spey and other rivers, but may possibly prove what I suggested. It is at least a very curious coincidence, that the Tweed, which abounds in common Trout, abounds also in Bull Trout ; whereas in the Annan and the Tay, where Trout are very scarce, the Grey or Bull Trout is very scarce also. But though crosses may be produced by mechanical impregnation, it is a matter of grave consideration whether such take place naturally. Trout, however, are always seen near the spawning beds of the other *Salmonidæ*.

"The young of these Sea Trout," says Mr. Shaw, "at the age of six months bear no very marked resemblance to the young of the real Salmon, either in the parr or fry state ; and as they advance in age and size the resemblance becomes still slighter. But upon comparing them with the common Trout, the resemblance is very striking, the general outline of the fish being much less elegant than that of the young Salmon or Parr ; the external markings being also more peculiarly those of the Trout species ; so that in the absence of the parent skins, which I carefully preserved, it would be a matter of difficulty to determine to which kind of Trout they actually belong."

Mr. Shaw afterwards impregnated the ova of the Salmon with the milt of the common River Trout, according to my suggestion ; and in a letter with which he favoured me, dated 26th of April, 1841, he says : "I am happy to inform you that my experiments with the ova of the common Trout and Salmon have been quite successful, and the young hybrids are now hatched, and in good health." Mr. Shaw will, of course, publish the details of his late experiments, and thus add to the obligations which those who are interested in this subject already owe him.

I will only add, that his papers are written with such candour, and all his experiments conducted with such care and ability, and so often repeated with similar results, without any effort or intention to make them bend to a favourite theory, that every one, I think, who reads his pages, must consider

that the Parr and the Salmon are of the same species, and that the question is so far set at rest for ever.

To sum up—it appears that the young fry had burst the egg 101 days after impregnation, the temperature of the water being at that time  $43^{\circ}$ , and the temperature of the atmosphere  $45^{\circ}$ : a former brood, which died and were excluded in a colder temperature, did not come into life till 114 days after impregnation.

It further appears from a part of Mr. Shaw's publication, which I have not hitherto quoted, but which I have now before me, that the fry, at two months old, are only one inch and a quarter long; at four months, two inches and a half; and at six months, three inches and a quarter: that makes nine months and eight days after the impregnation of the spawn. At eighteen months old the fry measure six inches in length, and the milt of the male is matured, and can be made to flow from the body freely by the slightest pressure; but the females of a similar age do not exhibit a corresponding appearance as to the maturity of the roe. The male is at this time in the autumn of his second year, and lies about and in the spawning beds of the large Salmon, where he impregnates the ova. The following spring he is about seven inches and a half long, when beautiful silver scales grow over the spots and bars which have characterised him up to this period; and the majority of the breed then congregate, and go to sea with the first floods in May.

In the latter end of April, 1842, Mr. Shaw oblig-

ingly sent me two parcels of the Salmon fry, which arrived in good condition ; and although not so glossy as when first captured, were made brighter in appearance by the application of water. I carried them immediately to Barnes, the residence of Mr. Edward Cooke ; and having selected the most silvery amongst them, I begged him to paint it as faithfully as possible ; and after he had so done I desired that, *during my absence*, he would remove the scales from the upper half of the *same fish*, and paint it again as it should appear after such removal. The result will be seen in the accompanying lithograph, with the execution of which I did not at all interfere. It proves what has been asserted as to change of outward appearance.

All the fry, however, which go to sea at this period, have not their silver scales perfected ; but many have the bars and spots faintly indicated, as represented in the lithograph (No. 3) introduced a few pages forward—another fish selected from the same lot ; and although the majority of these little emigrants go to the sea in large masses about the first swells of the river in May, yet I have no doubt but that some are continually going down to the salt water in every month of the year—not with their silver scales on, but in the parr state. I say not with their silver scales, because no clear Smolt is ever seen in the Tweed during the summer and autumnal months. As the spawning season in the Tweed extends over a period of six months, some of the fry must be necessarily some months older than others—a circumstance which favours my sup-

" . . . Nil fuit unquam,  
Sic impur sibi . . . . "





position, that they are constantly descending to the sea ; and it is only a supposition, as I have no proof of the fact, and have never heard it suggested by any one. But if I should be right, it will clear up some things that cannot well be accounted for in any other mode. For instance, in the month of *March*, 1841, Mr. Yarrell informs me that he found a young Salmon in the London market, and which he has preserved in spirits, measuring only fifteen inches long, and weighing only fifteen ounces. And again, another the following *April*, sixteen and a half inches long, weighing twenty-four ounces. Now, one of these appeared two months and the other a month before the usual time when the fry congregate. According to the received doctrine, therefore, these animals were two of the migration of the preceding year ; and thus it must necessarily follow that they remained in salt water, one ten and the other eleven months, with an increase of growth so small as to be irreconcilable with the proof we have of the growth of the Gilse and Salmon during their residence in salt water.\*

\* Though the fact that parr are the young of salmon is now generally accepted knowledge, I fancy there are still rivers in remote districts where the old heresy flourishes. Certainly it flourished not so very many years ago in some parts of Wales. There has, of course, been later confirmation and amplification of the observations recorded by Scrope. And further methods of distinguishing the little salmon have been found, notably the scale formula and the mouth test. Curiously enough the drawing of the smolts given by Scrope, which is in many respects the best thing of its kind ever done, is faulty in one important detail, the size of the mouth. For the significance of the scale formula and the mouth, cf. Appendix. The story told by the scales under the microscope has been discussed in the Introduction.—(ED.)

Having now sent these tiresome little creatures to sea, it remains to me to trace their progress till they become Salmon.

A few, but a very few of these Smolts, return from the sea to the Tweed as early as the month of May ; that is, during the same month in which the *general* emigration takes place : they then weigh from a pound to two pounds each, and are long and thin, and very forked in the tail. They keep on ascending the river during the summer months, the newcomers increasing afterwards about a pound and a half a month on an average, but much less in their very young state. The most plentiful season in the Tweed, if there is a flood, is about St. Boswell's Fair, namely, the 18th of July, at which period they weigh from four to six pounds ; and those which leave the salt for the fresh water at the end of September, and during the month of October, sometimes come up the river of the weight of ten and eleven pounds, and even more. All these fish are known in the North by the name of *Gilses*, but by the London fishmongers are generally, I believe, called *Salmon Peel*. Some of them are much larger than small Salmon ; but by the term *Gilse* I mean young Salmon that have only been once to sea. They are easily distinguished from Salmon by their countenance and less plump appearance, and particularly by the diminished size of the part of the body next to the tail, which also is more forked than that of the Salmon. They remain in fresh water all the autumn and winter, and spawn at the same time with the Salmon, and in the manner which I

have already described. They return also to sea in the spring with the Salmon. It seems worthy of remark, that Salmon are oftentimes smaller than moderate sized Gilse ; but although such Gilse have only been once to sea, yet the period they have remained there must have exceeded the two short visits made by the *small* Salmon, and hence their superiority of size.

When these fish return to the river from their *second* visit to the sea, they are called *Salmon*, and are greatly altered in their shape and appearance ; the body is more full, and the tail less forked, and their countenance assumes a different aspect.\*

It has formerly been suggested that the Gilse was a separate species from the Salmon ; but they have been proved to be one and the same by very conclusive testimony. Many years ago, when I was on the Tweed, two were put in a salt pond by Mr. Berry : one of them was found dead, and supposed to have killed himself by rushing against a stake ; the other was taken out some time afterwards a complete Salmon. But I shall mention a recent experiment, made by a tacksman on the Duke of Sutherland's salmon fishings on the river Shin.

In the course of February and March, 1841, he took a considerable number of Gilses, and marked them with wire in various places sufficiently efficacious to be again recognised. Of these, ten were retaken in the course of the months of June and July

\* For the latest theories as to the return of salmon from the sea, as shown by the scales, cf. Introduction. The "gilse," by the way, is now usually known as grilse.—(ED.)

following, by which time they had assumed the size and all the distinctive marks of the genuine Salmon. The following table shows when each was taken, and its weight at that time, and its increased weight when recaptured. In addition to the fact which it establishes of the identity of the Gilse with the Salmon, it shows also how rapid the growth of the Gilse is in his process of becoming a Salmon :—

When marked.	When retaken.	Weight of Gilse.	Weight of Salmon.
		lbs.	lbs.
February 18	June 23	4	9
18	25	4	11
18	25	4	9
18	25	4	10
18	27	4	13
18	28	4	10
March 4	July 1	4	12
4	1	4	14
4	10	12	18
4	27	4	12

The above disparity of growth is easily accounted for, since it is not probable that these fish, which were caught and returned to the river in February, went down to the sea before March, if, indeed, so early : of course they would not increase in growth in fresh water, though they would mend somewhat in weight after their weak spawning state. Setting these, therefore, aside, it appears that the growth of the last four fish averaged two pounds each per month when they were at sea ; and if they remained in the river after the 4th of March, as it is reasonable to suppose they did, then their growth must have been proportionally greater.

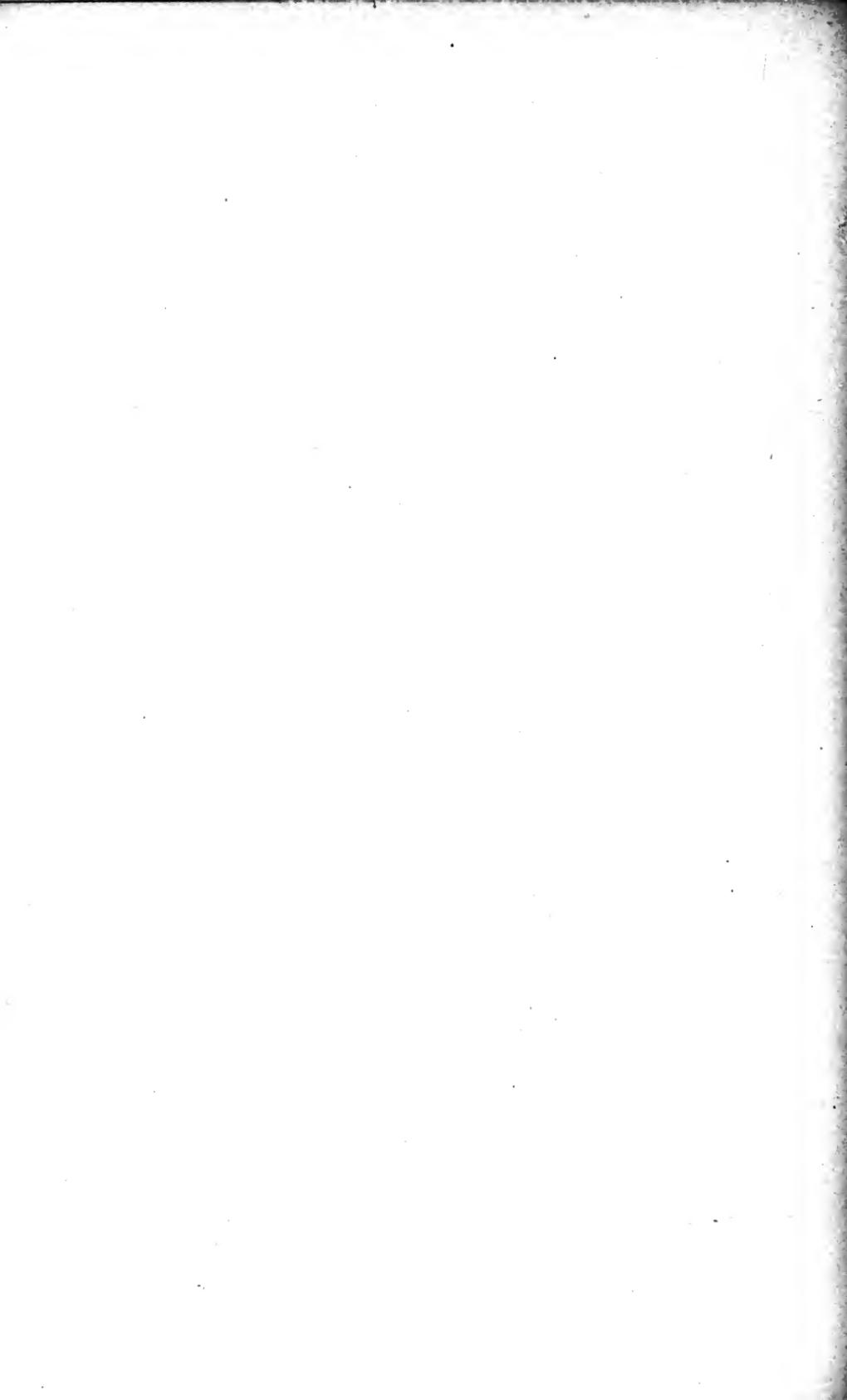
For the scientific and successful experiments of Mr. Shaw, the Keith medal was awarded to him for



Scale of a 5 $\frac{1}{4}$  in. parr in autumn, which has nearly completed its second year of life.



Scale of a 5 lb. grilse which has spent three years in the river before migration and one-and-a-half years in the sea afterwards.



the biennial period of 1838 and 1839 : it is of gold, and of the intrinsic value of sixty guineas.

The importance of his proof is immense ; for the Parrs not having been before considered to be young Salmon, have not been hitherto protected by the law beyond the short period in which they assume their silver dress, and thus have been killed by hundreds of thousands, by the multitude of boys and men who angle in the various tributary burns and rivers that pour their waters into the Tweed.

Mr. John Wilson says, in his evidence before the Select Committee, taken in 1824—" I have seen from my own window upwards of seventy or eighty people angling within the distance of half a mile on the Tweed." Then there is the Tiviot ; the Adder, comprising the White Adder and Black Adder ; the Till, the Eden, the Kale, the Oxnam, the Jed, the Ale, the Rule, the Slitrig, the Gala, the Carter, the Borthwick, the Leader, the Ettrick, the Yarrow, the Lyne, the Eddlestone, the Manor, the Quhair, with many smaller burns and mountain streams. In floods Salmons enter and spawn in most of these rivers, if not in all of them ; at the subsiding of the waters some of them fall back, and some are left nearly dry, and easily captured. It is ordained by nature that the Parr should in these cases impregnate such ova as have been deposited, perhaps because he is not so easily discovered, or such an object of attraction as a Salmon. What an ample space the above streams present for the destruction of the fry ! And not only are they killed by the rod, each urchin, perhaps, taking eight or ten dozen a

day, but by various other means in a wholesale manner.

Mr. William Laidlaw,\* a gentleman mentioned with so much merited praise in the best biographical work extant, perhaps, who formerly lay under the general misapprehension regarding the Parr, writes to me as follows :—

“ So great was the number of Parrs in the rivulet of *Douglas Burn*, that I have seen five dozen taken out of one small pool with aid of a pair of old blankets ; and I and my playfellows, when boys, have committed great havoc by damming up one of the streams, where the rivulet happened to divide into two, and laying the other as dry as we could. The Parrs were so numerous, that we used to make the water white with the milt of those we killed. When the water was lowering, the poor creatures, instead of swimming downwards, where they would have had a chance of safety, all kept *swattinger* upwards, and we actually killed them by hundreds. But a fact, which I could not account for, was this —namely, that they appeared to come up the rivulet during the early part of the summer only ; but after the month of September there were very few to be seen, and not any in October ; and when this discovery relative to the Parr was first made, and *I think it was from yourself I had it twenty years ago*, I used to notice that there were scarcely any Parrs in the Tweed during the winter months.”

So far Mr. Laidlaw. The disappearance of the

\* I am greatly indebted to this gentleman for his communications respecting T. Purdie.

Parrs from the burns is easily accounted for. They would naturally avoid the cold shallow rivulets, and fall into the deep and warmer water of the Tweed during the winter months, where they could not be well discovered, or be so subject to the action of torrents.

Besides the destruction of the fry in this and similar modes, we must add the thousands that are illegally taken at mill-dams, and the injury which the long net occasions in sweeping over the spawning beds. In the evidence taken before a Committee of the House of Commons in 1824 or 1825, there was an attempt to prove that no harm could be done in this latter manner, as there was no weight, but only a rope attached at the bottom of the net. This is very true; but the rope itself is sufficiently heavy to sink to the bottom, and disturb the gravel of the spawning beds, which, being newly raked up, and put together by the Salmon, must be easily displaced. It is fair, however, to observe, that the long net is not used in the generality of such places as fish commonly spawn in.

To these sweeping modes of destruction we must add the great havoc committed by the eels and trout, which devour the spawn; and when we consider the peculiar powers and habits of the eel, a fish most abundant in the Tweed, we must at once see that a ruinous devastation is occasioned by these creatures, which bore through the gravel.

Strongly, however, as all these causes operate, there is one more destructive than all of them put together; namely, the effect of the furious spates

## 46 DAYS AND NIGHTS OF SALMON FISHING

which are continually taking place in the Tweed, and which put the channel in motion, and often sweep away the spawning beds altogether.

Before the hills were so well drained as at present, this was not so much the case ; as the mosses gave out the water gradually, and the river continued full for a long time, to the great solace of the rod fisher. But now every hill is scored with little rills which fall into the burns, which suddenly become rapid torrents and swell the main river, which dashes down to the ocean with tremendous violence. Amidst the great din, you may hear the rattling of the channel stones, as they are borne downwards. Banks are torn away ; new deeps are hollowed out, and old ones filled up ; so that great changes continually take place in the bed of the river either for the better or the worse.

When we contemplate these things, we must at once acknowledge the vast importance of Mr. Shaw's experiments ; for if ponds were constructed up the Tweed at the general expense, after the model of those made by him, all these evils would be avoided. The fry might be produced in any quantities by artificial impregnation ; be preserved, and turned into the great river at the proper period of migration. There might at first be some difficulty in procuring food for them ; but this would easily be got over. At a very small expense, and with a few adult Salmon, more fry may be sent to sea annually than the whole produce of the river at present amounts to, after having encountered the sweeping perils I have mentioned.

Proprietors should call meetings for this purpose ; and Parrs, hitherto so called, should be protected by law. Let all who have an interest in the river consider the wisdom of mutual accommodation. The proprietors of the lower part of the river are dependent on the upper ones for the protection of the spawning fish and the fry ; and they on their part depend upon the lower ones for the strict adherence to the weekly close time.\*

I think this method of artificial impregnation would prove somewhat more successful than the method said to be adopted by the Chinese, which, for the better enlightening of barbaric nations, I will transmit to posterity, from the authority of *The English Chronicle* of the 25th July, 1839 :—

“ The Chinese have taken a fancy to hatch fish under fowls. For this purpose they collect from rivers and ponds the gelatinous matter which contains the eggs of fish, put it into vessels, and sell it to the proprietors of ponds. When the hatching season arrives, a fowl’s egg is emptied of its usual contents, and this gelatinous matter is put in. The entrance is hermetically sealed, and the egg is then put under a hen. After some days it is opened, and placed in a vessel of water heated by the sun ; it is

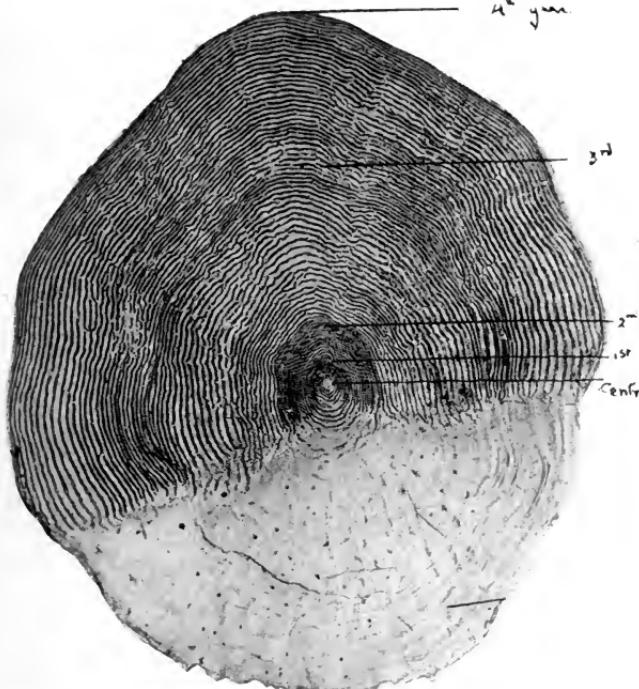
\* The question of salmon hatcheries has been much debated since Scrope’s time and a good many experiments have been tried. The general opinion seems to be nowadays that Nature’s hatcheries are effective enough provided that they have fair play. But hatcheries have not yet been tried in this country on a scale large enough to afford conclusive proof of their ability to keep up the stock of salmon by themselves. The whole question of conserving salmon has been discussed in the introduction.—(ED.)

kept in the rays until the little fish become strong enough to bear the external temperature."

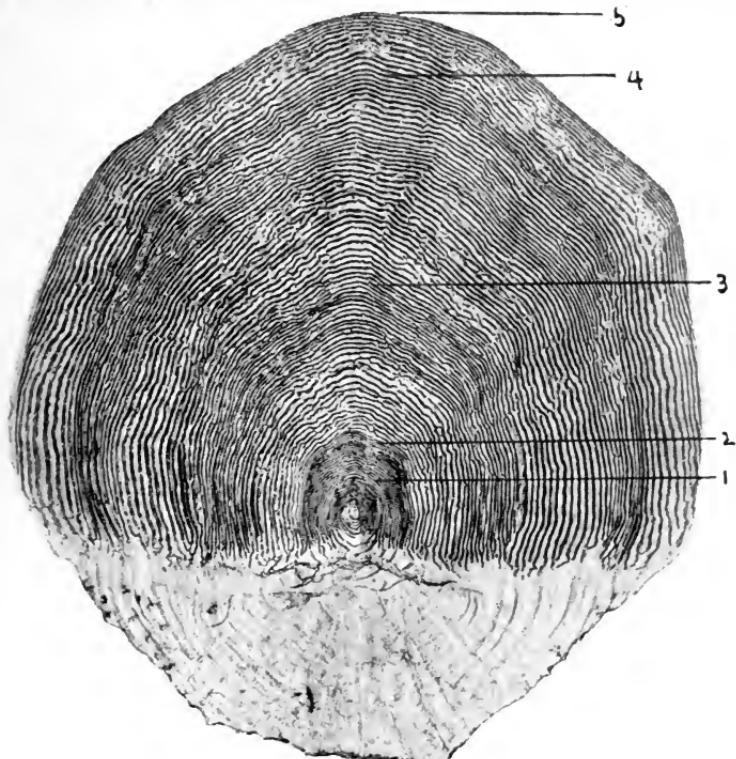
Not to derogate from the ingenuity of the celestial nation, I have no doubt but that fowls may be dispensed with, and that a river may be stocked with any sort of common fish by transmitting the ova and milt amalgamated, embedded in gravel, and placed in a vessel filled up with water. One of our best fish, namely Trout, cannot be sent alive even to a moderate distance. It is worth while, therefore, to try the experiment. According to a letter published by the late Sir Anthony Carlisle, something nearly approaching to this was done by him in the river Wandle about thirty years ago. He then imbedded the ova of the Salmon in the gravel without the milt of the male, leaving the River Trout to impregnate them: he asserts that they did so, and that the river was afterwards full of the fry so produced. It would be interesting to put the Salmon eggs properly impregnated with the milt of the same species in one of our best streams—in the upper parts of the Test, for instance—and to investigate the result from year to year.

Salmon keep on increasing in size till they attain a prodigious weight, even up to eighty-three pounds;\*

\* This 83 pounder still remains the largest on record, so far as I know. But a dead fish was found in the Wye in 1920 which might conceivably have weighed as much when alive. It was 59½ inches long with a girth of 33½ inches, dimensions which should give a weight of over 80 lb. As so often happens, however, the weight was not taken at the time. The monster had been hooked by some angler and had a minnow in its mouth. A week later the fish was found again much decomposed and damaged, and it then weighed 43 lb.—(Ed.)



Scale of a small spring fish,  $9\frac{1}{2}$  lb., female. Two years in river as parr, two in sea before returning.



Scale of a large spring fish,  $23\frac{1}{2}$  lb., male. Two years in river as parr, three in sea before returning.



which, says Mr. Yarrell, is the largest fish on record, and was exhibited at Mr. Grove's, fishmonger, in Bond Street, about the season of 1821. This was a female fish ; and, from the observation of the same eminent authority, those fish which attain a very unusual size have always proved to be females.

But the devices and intelligence of fishermen have increased as Salmon have become more marketable, so that few escape all the perils that beset them long enough to gain any considerable size ; and we no more hear, as in days of yore, of a fish being exchanged, weight for weight, for a Highland wedder, and the butcher having to pay. The Salmon in the Tweed are no longer large ; far from it. During my experience of twenty years I never caught one there above thirty pounds, and very few above twenty. I have remarked that the largest fish are found in the most considerable rivers, which I attribute to the superior chance of longevity where fish have a greater scope for escape.\*

It appears, from the above facts and observations, that Salmon are not uniform in their habits. Some come into the river many months before they are in a spawning condition, and remain in it till the time

\* The Tweed has in some measure recovered its reputation for big fish since Scrope wrote this. Thirty-pounders are not uncommon in a good autumn and much heavier specimens are caught sometimes. The heaviest Tweed fish caught on a rod on record is one of 57½ lb. which was caught on the Floors water in 1886 by Mr. Pryor. In 1907 one of 60 lb. was found dead in the Mertoun water. In the spring the fish do not run so big, a 20-pounder being somewhat unusual. In 1920, however, a 43-pounder was caught on April 22, on the Rutherford water, and this is accounted the biggest spring fish ever taken from the river on rod and line.—(ED.)

comes for depositing their spawn ; getting worse in condition every day they are in fresh water, and thus, as it should seem, doing unnecessary penance all that time. Others, again, remain in the sea, thriving all the while, and do not enter the rivers till their spawn is nearly matured. I have said above that I believe the Smolts singly, or in small quantities, are continually falling down to the sea in nearly if not quite every month of the year, according to their age ; but that they congregate, and go there in vast shoals in the beginning of the month of May. There seems to be a corresponding habit as to the time of their return ; for they come back at first in small quantities, and periodically in the spring and summer months, and in July they arrive in vast quantities ; and this sudden abundance consists, I think, of the fry that have assembled and gone to sea the preceding May, whilst the others that ascend at different periods are the Smolts that go down in the same manner.

The accompanying lithograph represents a fry in the state when the silver scales just begin to appear, and soften the bars and spots—the intermediate state between the summer Parr and Smolt.

As to the belief that Salmon return to the same river in which they are bred, I hold it to be a well-founded one. But I think it is not invariably the case ; and that should their native river be too low for their ascent, owing to an extraordinary drought, and continue so when the period of spawning approaches, most of the Salmon will seek and ascend some other river that may be contiguous to it,



INTERVENING STATE



whose volume of water is more abundant. Thus many Tweed Salmon have been caught in the Forth, and a very successful fishing there is generally followed by a scarce one in the Tweed.

It appears that Salmon will live, and even breed, in fresh water, without ever making a visit to the sea. Mr. Lloyd, in his interesting and entertaining work on the Field Sports of the North of Europe, says, "Near Katrinebergh there is a valuable fishery for Salmon, ten or twelve thousand of these fish being taken annually. These Salmon are bred in a lake, and in consequence of cataracts cannot have access to the sea. They are small in size, and inferior in flavour. The year 1820 furnished 21,817."\*

Mr. George Dormer of Stone Mills, in the parish of Bridport, put a female of the Salmon tribe, which measured twenty inches in length, and was caught by him at his mill-dam, into a small well, where it remained twelve years, and at length died in the year 1842. The well measured only 5 feet by 2 feet 4 inches, and there was only 15 inches depth of water. In this confined spot she remained up to Saturday the 12th of last month, when death put a period to her existence. This fish has been the means of great attraction since the time she was mentioned in the newspapers, which was about five

\* The "land-locked" salmon, as it is called, seems to be merely *S. salar* with a habit of migration to a big lake instead of the sea. Lake Wenern in Sweden, and some of the big lakes in N.E. America contain these fish, called "ouananiche" in America. As might be expected salmon with a lake migration do not reach such a weight as their sea-going brethren, anything over 10 lb. being considered big. It is, of course, a question of food supplies.—(Ed.)

years ago, many persons having come a great distance to see her ; and those who have witnessed her actions (of whom there are many in the city of Exeter) can bear testimony to the truth of the following statement : " She would come to the top of the water and take meat off a plate, and would devour a quarter of a pound of lean meat in less time than a man could eat it ; she would also allow Mr. Dormer to take her out of the water, and, when put into it again, she would immediately take meat from his hands, or would even bite the finger if presented to her. Some time since a little girl teased her, by presenting the finger and then withdrawing it, till at last she leaped a considerable height above the water, and caught her by the said finger, which made it bleed profusely : by this leap she threw herself completely out of the water into the court. At one time a young duckling got into the well to solace himself in his favourite element, when she immediately seized him by the leg, and took him under water ; but the timely interference of Mr. Dormer prevented any further mischief than making a cripple of the young duck. At another time a full-grown drake approached the well, and put in his head to take a draught of the water, when Mrs. Fish, seeing a trespasser on her premises, immediately seized the intruder by the bill, and a desperate struggle ensued, which at last ended in the release of Mr. Drake from the grasp of Mrs. Fish, and no sooner freed than Mr. Drake flew off in the greatest consternation and affright ; since which time to this day he has not been seen to approach the well, and

it is with great difficulty he can be brought within sight of it. This fish lay in a dormant state for five months in the year, during which time she would eat nothing, and was likewise very shy."\*

That Salmon and some other fish assume in some degree the colour of the channel they lie upon, from whatever cause, is a circumstance pretty generally admitted by those who have paid any attention to the subject ; and this, perhaps, is the reason why fishermen tell you that they can distinguish the Salmon of one river from those of another contiguous to it. Indeed, I myself could easily distinguish the Isla from the Tay Salmon by their colours, when I rented fisheries on both those rivers. This fact I thought so curious, that I had some correspondence with my eminent friend Sir David Brewster on the subject ; and at the Literary and Philosophical Society of St. Andrew's, Dr. Gillespie read the following paper, entitled " Recollections of the Habits, Colours, and Sufferings of Fishes."

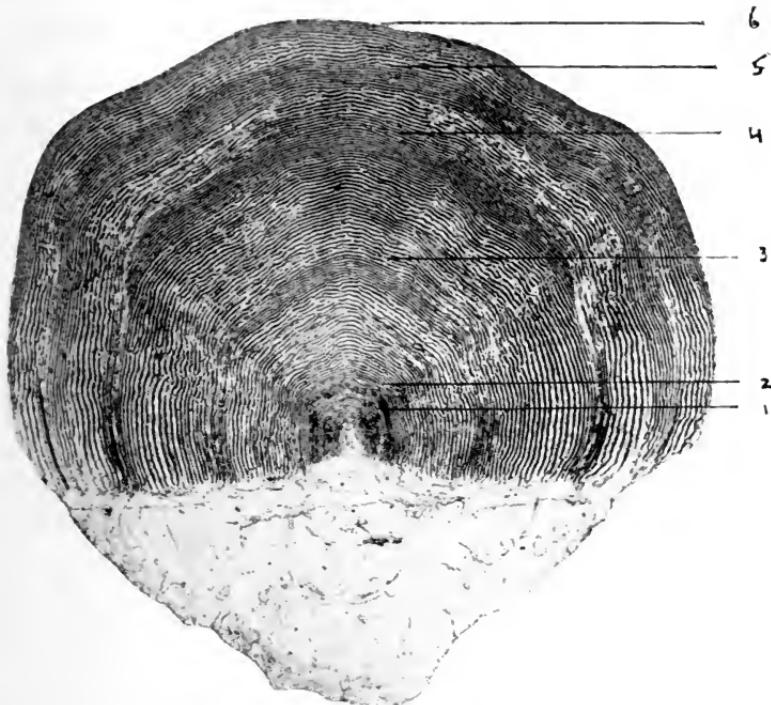
" My chief experience is with trouts—such as are found in our mountain lakes and streams ; and it is mainly to these that my few recollections refer. Trouts seem to have a generic type, comprehending several apparently different species ; which difference, however, in many cases, disappears when the circumstances under which they are viewed are the same. I know a locality in Dumfries-shire, amidst the hills of Queensbery, where three mountain streams, all of different character, meet—the one

\* This account seems to have been sent to a Devonshire newspaper by Mr. Dormer himself, or some of his family.

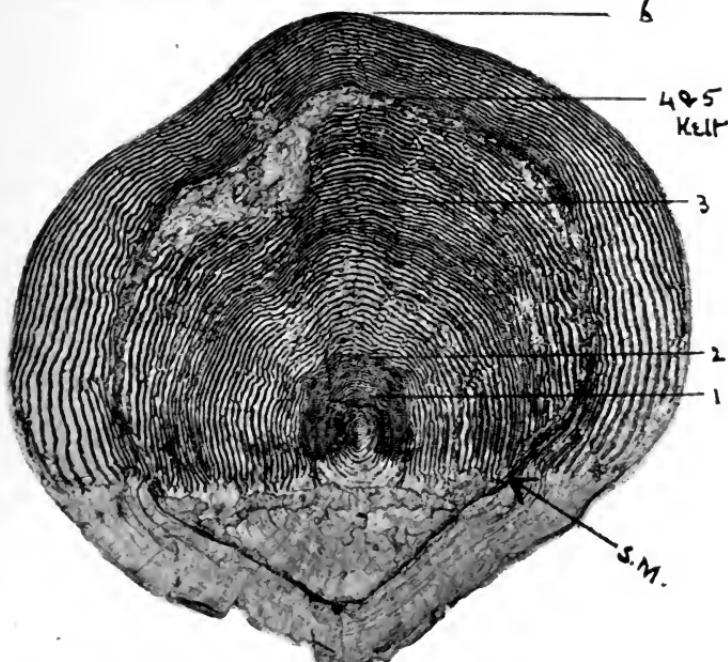
proceeding from a moss ; the other running over a clear channelly bed ; and the third, from its clayey banks and bottoms, exhibiting a milk-and-water aspect, like the ‘ *flavus Tiberis* ’ (or *Albula*) of Italy. Now the trouts in all these streams were of the same generic type ; but differed, notwithstanding, in external appearance or colour. The moss race were of the Roderick Dhu tint—aspect grim and swarthy : the clear channel produced those of a brightly spotted appearance ; and the clay bottom exhibited a correspondingly bluish race. Now, you might convert the blue fish into bright, and the bright again into black, by merely transferring them into the corresponding streams. This often took place, more or less, after what is called a thunder plump, which falls partially, and is quite local. I have seen one of these streams overflowing its banks, and carrying all before it, whilst its two mountain sisters remained calm and unmoved. Upon the ebbing of this partial flood, the trouts in the two conjoining streams immediately rush in quest of food (particularly after a long drought) into the other ; and, in less time than any one who has not marked the fact could believe, they all become of the same appearance. Upon returning again into their native waters, they reassume their former colour. Fill your basket with fish from all the three streams, and in a little while that part of the bodies which presses against the others will exhibit the same appearance, whilst the other parts will remain as before ; and hence the clouded aspect they exhibit. I once threw a trout, by accident, from a clear channel stream

over my head into a peat-moss pool behind me, which had no communication with the running water; and after a few months I caught him as black and portly as possible. Such facts certainly prove, to my own satisfaction at least, that trouts do not vary in original and indelible type so much as is generally imagined. In regard to what follows upon the changing colours of fish when in the act of dying, I cannot speak with the same certainty ; but either my eyes deceived me very much (and at the period of life to which I refer they were pretty good), or I observed the following phenomena : I usually killed my fish, not by breaking their necks, as is now generally the method adopted, but by slapping their heads against a stone, the edge of my shoe, or the butt of my fishing-rod ; and even when a boy I was sensible of some change which took place in the colour of the dying victim. A kind of streamer, or phosphorus light, seemed to shoot along the quivering flesh, and only ceased with the life of the trout. In salmon I should think the fact is still more manifest. The salmon fishery at the Eden afforded me an accidental proof of this. Some summers ago I was in the habit of bathing near the stakes at ebb tide, when the salmon were removed from the nets. I had a pleasure in walking into the inside of the nets, and seeing the finely-shaped living salmon plunging about, and still in their native element. Upon securing the fish, the men were in the habit of giving them the *coup de grace* on the forehead with a wooden mallet—analogous to my fishing-rod butt ; and at each successive

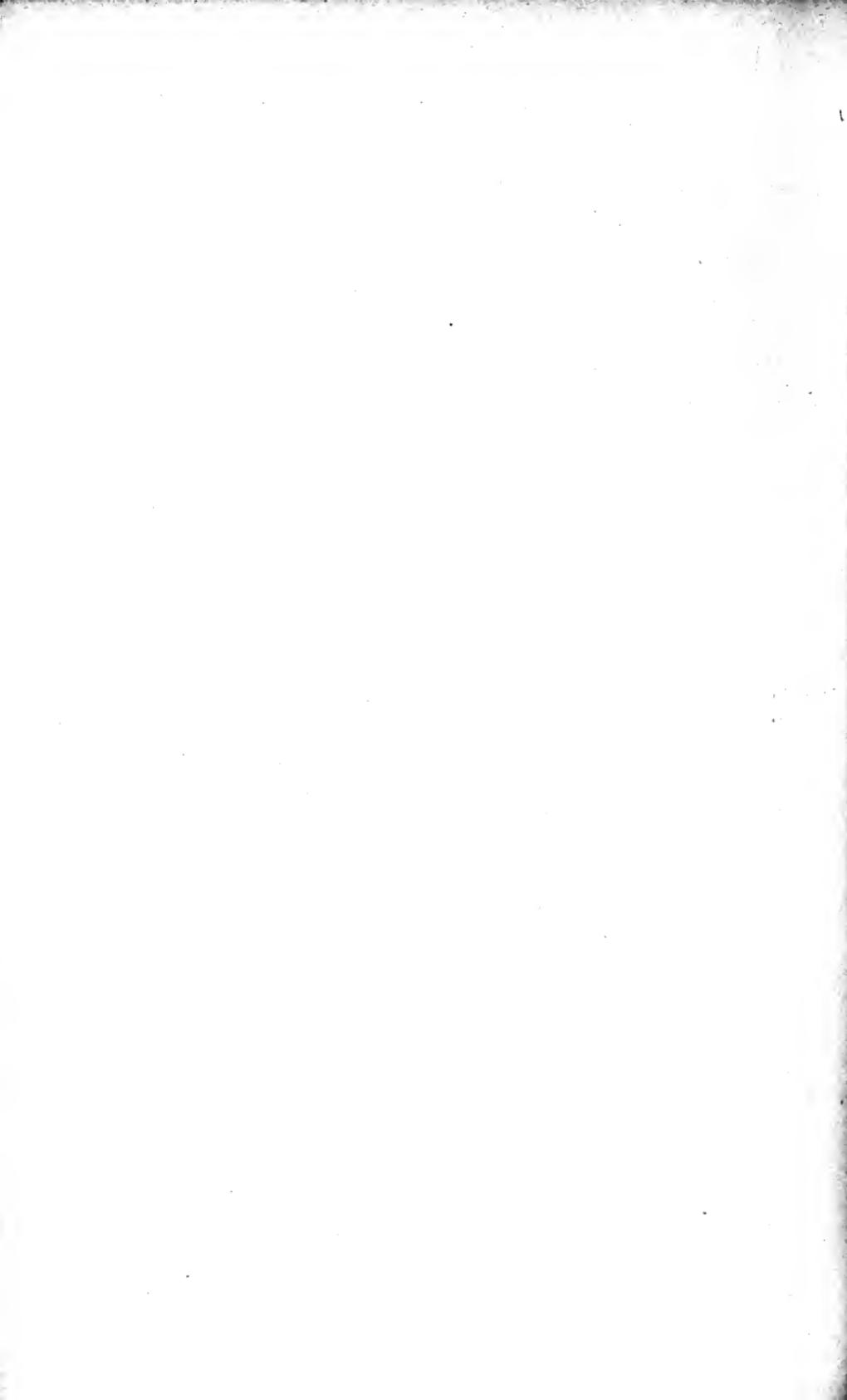
stroke on the brain, the colours undulated away in the most delicate and beautiful radiance. All this is, indeed, exceedingly revolting to humanity, and presents a tempting theme for the reprobation of the poet and sentimentalist ; and yet I confess that I cannot enter completely into this feeling, not only from my enjoyment of, and relish for, the sport of rod-fishing, but even from considerations of a more legitimate bearing. I do not think that cold-blooded animals suffer equally with warm-blooded ; and my grounds for forming this opinion I shall shortly state. I have often lost a trout which had gorged my bait, and yet recaptured him in a short time with the former hook deep fastened in his stomach, and the broken line pending from his jaws. I, for one, certainly should have had little appetite to dine so soon after swallowing a fork. I have seen a large trout enjoying the amplitude of a clear pond with a couple of my fly-hooks appended to his nose. Nay, I have even witnessed him rising to a natural fly in this situation, whilst, fisher-like, he caught a smaller companion by the depending hook. Nature is wonderfully benevolent to her children. The absence of all kind of medical aid in the waters seems to be fully compensated by the *vis medicatrix naturæ*—an old experienced practitioner, by whose management the most severe wounds made by the pike upon the trout, and the grampus upon the salmon, are safely and rapidly cured. I have caught trouts, particularly in the neighbourhood where pike harbour, in various states of mutilation, yet seemingly in good health and spirits ; from all which I



Scale of a very large spring fish, 44 1/2 lb., male. Two years in river as parr, four years in sea before returning.



Scale of a 25 1/2 lb. female fish, showing a spawning mark. Two years in river as parr, two years in sea before returning, spawned, went to sea as a kelt, and returned a second time as a six-year-old.



infer that their physical sufferings are less than we suppose, and that the quiverings which they exhibit when dying are rather of a galvanic (which the change of colour seems to countenance) than of a convulsive or very painful character. It is, at least, comfortable for those who have been accessory in early life to much apparent suffering, to find out afterwards that the suffering was more apparent than real.'

"Sir David Brewster stated to the Society that he had been led to consider this subject in consequence of a correspondence with W. Scrope, Esq., who had paid much attention to the change of colour in fishes. Mr. Scrope was of opinion that a real change of colour took place, if not voluntarily, at least very quickly ; and he supported his views by the following opinions of Mr. Yarrell and Mr. Shaw :

"' An interesting account (says Mr. Yarrell) of some experiments made by Dr. Stark, was published in Jamieson's *Edinburgh Journal* for 1830, page 327. It shows that the colour of sticklebacks, and some other small fishes, is influenced not only by the colour of the earthenware or other vessel in which they are kept, but also modified by the quantity of light to which they are exposed ; becoming pale when placed in a white vessel in darkness, even for a comparatively short time, and regaining their natural colour when placed in the sun. From these circumstances, observed also in some species of other genera, Dr. Stark is led to infer that fishes possess, to a certain extent, the power of accommodating their colour to the ground or bottom of the waters in which they are found. The final reason for this

may be traced to the protection such a power affords to secure them from the attacks of their enemies, and exhibits another beautiful instance of the care displayed by Nature in the preservation of all her species. Dr. Stark often observed that on a flat, sandy coast, the flounders were coloured so very much like the sand, that, unless they moved, it was impossible to distinguish them from the bottom on which they lay.'

" Mr. Shaw, who has the charge of the salmon cruive at Drumlanrig, has observed that the Salmon taken in it change their colour in consonance with the turbid or refined state of the water. In the experiments he has made with Parr in different-coloured earthenware vessels, the change of colour is perfected in the space of four minutes. If Parr is taken from the dark-coloured vessel, and put immediately to the Parr in the light-coloured one, the difference of colour between the two fish will be found strikingly observable.

" Mr. Scrope himself had observed that the Trout at Castle Combe are white in a chalky spate, resuming their colour when the water clears ; and that in all the rivers in which he had fished, the fish are clear in a gravelly bottom, and dark in that overhung with trees. All this he considered as resulting from the same principle of preservation by which the ptarmigan and alpine hares have their colours changed with the approach of snow.

" Notwithstanding these distinct statements by so many observers in whom confidence might be placed, Sir David thought that the experiments required to

be repeated by persons acquainted with those branches of physical optics with which the phenomena were intimately allied. It is very easy to explain why a fish may appear dark in a dark vessel, and light in a coloured one ; and why it should have a still different appearance when taken out of both vessels and exposed to the light of the sun. All bodies assume the colour of the light which they reflect, and a brilliant light will develop colours which are invisible in light of ordinary intensity. As the peculiar colours of fishes depend on the thickness or size of certain minute transparent particles, it is not easy to understand how the fish could voluntarily alter the size or thickness of those particles, or how exposure to another colour could permanently produce the same mechanical effect. If a fish is kept in mossy or muddy water, it will doubtless absorb the colouring matter which the water may contain ; but this is rather a process of dyeing than one of physiological action. The changes said to take place in the colour of fishes when dying might arise from the drying of their scales, which produces a change in all colours, but particularly in those of thin films, which are quite different when they are dry from what they are when immersed in a fluid.

" A conversational discussion then took place, in which Professor Connell supported Dr. Gillespie's views, and Dr. Reid those of Sir D. Brewster."

This subject is in such good hands, that I shall not intrude any speculative observations of my own. We have lately seen such wonderful effects

produced by the agency of light, that these things are become less startling.

It is very certain that Trouts and Salmon are less vivid in colour, and in fact more grey, when they have been some time out of their element ; fish-mongers throw water from time to time over their fish, as well to preserve their colour as to keep them fresh. I would recommend any one who wishes to show his day's sport in the pink of perfection, to keep his Trouts in a wet cloth, so that on his return home he may exhibit them to his admiring friends, and extract from them the most approved of epithets and exclamations, taking the praise bestowed upon the fish as a particular compliment to himself.

Since our writing the above remarks, I have paid more attention to the subject, and am enabled to state that in one particular part of the river Chess, I have been in the habit of taking Trouts of a darker and greyer colour than those which I captured in the other parts of this little stream ; and, observing this to be invariably the case, I desired my fisherman to scoop up some of the channel with his landing net, which proved upon inspection to be part of a stratum of black flint.

I can state farther—what appears to me to be altogether a curious circumstance. I had often observed that the largest of those Trout which almost continually lay under the *hides*, which were constructed in the stream and covered with boards—being, in fact, large troughs open at the lower end so as to admit the fish, and staked within so as to

preserve them from being poached out—were of a very black colour : this arose, no doubt, from the privation of light. Sometimes I have seen them lying on the shallows within a few yards of the hide, where they still retained their black hue. I caught with a minnow one of these dirty-looking animals in the month of June last. He was not only black in the back, so that he could be seen at a considerable distance in the water, but was also of a granulated inky cast on his sides and underneath : his resort was under a hide in comparative darkness. He was not wasted, but of the same proportions with his brighter companions. I concluded, however, that from his African appearance he would cut but a sorry figure at the table ; but being about three-quarters of a pound, with no promise of amendment, I bagged him notwithstanding. As this was the first Trout I took that morning, he lay at the bottom of my basket. After catching a few more lower down in the river, I thought I would have another look at my swarthy captive. I found him more praiseworthy than at first ; for the upper side, which came in contact with the other fish, became also bright, and of a colour exactly similar to them, whilst the lower side that touched the dry basket retained its original dark hue ; but by turning that part of the fish also towards the others, the whole Trout after a time became of a uniform bright colour, and was not in that respect dissimilar to the rest. I do not mean to hint that the blackamoor was dyed by his dead companions, because I think that a wet cloth would have produced the same effect ; but it

seems extraordinary that the water, which had no effect upon his colour when living in the river, should have so decided a one after he was dead—not bringing back the original dye, but removing the dark tint entirely.

But to return to my subject.

It is an undoubted fact that Salmon ascend some rivers much earlier than others. I have rented fisheries both in Tweed and Tay, and to my own knowledge the latter river is a month earlier than the former. The Esk and the Eden both fall into the Solway Firth, and are only separated at their mouths by a sharp point of land ; yet, according to the statement of Mr. Howard,\* a proprietor and renter of the river Eden, new fish go up that river three months before they ascend the Esk, and the month of February is one of the greatest produce there. The Irthing falls into the Eden; and may be a fourth of its water ; but no Salmon run up it, except in spawning time. Now the waters of the Eden may be presumed to be of a warmer temperature than those of the Esk, which latter is a brawling shallow stream, wider also than the Eden, which is of a deeper and more tranquil nature.

Snow-water† is offensive to fish, and they will not ascend a river whilst it is impregnated with it.

\* Evidence before Select Committee in 1825, p. 140.

† There is snow-water *and* snow-water. A very cold dirty spate, the result of a sudden thaw on snow lying in the valleys, may have a deterrent effect on running fish. But the gradual melting of "packed" snow on the hills is another matter. Some of the Norwegian rivers depend largely on such snow for their early summer volume and the consequent ascent of salmon. And the same thing is in a measure true of some of the Scottish streams.—(Ed.)

Setting aside this impediment, and *cæteris paribus*, I believe the season of all rivers depends upon the temperature of their waters during the winter and spring months. Thus the Ness is the forwardest river in Scotland, which the following table of monthly captures produced by Mr. Alexander Fraser\* will prove.

### STATEMENT OF THE NUMBER OF SALMON KILLED IN THE NESS IN TWELVE YEARS

	1811.	1811-12.	1812-13.	1813-14.	1814-15.	1815-16.	1816-17.	1817-18.	1818-19.	Total Salmon monthly in Eight Years.
Dec.	Sal.	Gr.	Sal.	Gr.	Sal.	Gr.	Sal.	Gr.	Sal.	Gr.
1812.	226	-	454	-	391	-	240	-	324	-
Jan.	427	-	565	-	354	-	204	-	370	-
Feb.	194	-	874	-	289	-	296	-	298	-
March	103	-	591	-	522	-	164	-	645	-
April	157	-	461	-	227	-	195	-	283	-
May	29	-	157	-	359	-	152	-	102	-
June	6	39	16	27	69	180	7	20	16	11
July	25	211	38	208	21	263	5	97	40	104
Aug.	236	1301	318	700	221	710	292	186	187	406
Sept.	77	482	74	169	15	97	21	142	18	126
	1480	2093	3550	1104	2468	1250	1622	435	2283	707
										4155
										711
										1695
										603
										1293
										444
										18546

	Sal.
1819-1820	1215
1820-1821	1806
1821-1822	710
1822-1823	344

Now it must be observed that the Ness never freezes, even with the most intense frost. In the year 1807, when the thermometer at Inverness was from 23 to 30 and even 40 degrees below the freezing point, it made no impression upon the river or the lake. "The Ness (says Mr. Fraser) was always privileged earlier than any river in Scotland from

\* Evidence before Select Committee in 1825, p. 42.

## 64 DAYS AND NIGHTS OF SALMON FISHING

this cause ; and it will be evident that the Salmon taken in December and January are the most valuable produce : for though they appear to be only one-third of the total number, yet from their size they constitute more than half the weight."

The most forward rivers in Ireland, I am informed by the London fishmongers, and from other sources, are those on the western coast. In England, perhaps the Severn produces the finest Salmon during the winter months ; and the Lord Viscount Clive, proprietor of a salmon fishery in the Severn, near Poole Quay, says\* the best fish are commonly taken there in November, December, and January, though they are not numerous, and that in the Dovey and Tivy, two rivers with which he is well acquainted, the Salmon are always in the best season at the period when the Severn Salmon are in the worst condition.

But if Salmon prefer the warmest rivers in the winter, they spawn earliest in those that are most cold. Thus in the shallow mountain streams which pour into the Tay nearer its sources (I do not mean such as may issue from lochs), the fish spawn much earlier than those in the main bed of the river. The late John Crerar, head fisherman and forester to the Duke of Atholl, wrote thus in his manuscript :—

" There are two kinds of creatures that I am well acquainted with—the one a land animal, the other a water one : the red deer, and the salmon. In October the deer ruts, and the salmon spawns. The deer begins soonest, high up amongst the hills, particularly in frosty weather ; so does the salmon

\* Minutes of Evidence taken in 1825, etc., p. 14.

begin to spawn earlier in frosty weather than in soft. The master hart would keep all the other harts from the hind, if he could ; and the male salmon would keep all the other males from the female, if he was able."

The gross rental of the salmon fishings in Tweed is very considerable ; but has varied very much in amount from time to time, according to the plenty or scarcity of fish. Mr. John Wilson\* states, that during the seven years previous to 1824 it averaged £12,000 a year ; but in that year only about £10,000. With the present rental I am unacquainted.

"The fishings, as regards their relative value, may be divided into the following classes : The first comprehends the short distance from the mouth of the river to Berwick Bridge, where alone there are probably a greater number of salmon captured than in all the remainder of the river. From Berwick Bridge to Norham, to which place the tide reaches, may be considered the second class : as far as this place the net and coble only are in use. From Norham to Coldstream Bridge the fishings are of still less value ; and here, besides the net and coble, the various modes of fishing practised in the upper parts of the river are also in use—*rod fishing, setting, leistering* ; cairn, hanging, and straik nets. From Coldstream to the Bridge of Kelso the net and coble are used only partially in floods ; and on Mondays, says Mr. Houy, when, by the cessation of the lower fishings on Sunday, the salmon get further up, I have seen from 100 to 500 salmon and gilses

\* Minutes of Evidence, etc., in 1824, p. 9.

caught at Kelso in the morning by the net and coble. From Kelso to the higher districts of the river the principal modes of fishing are by the rod, leister, cairn and straik net."

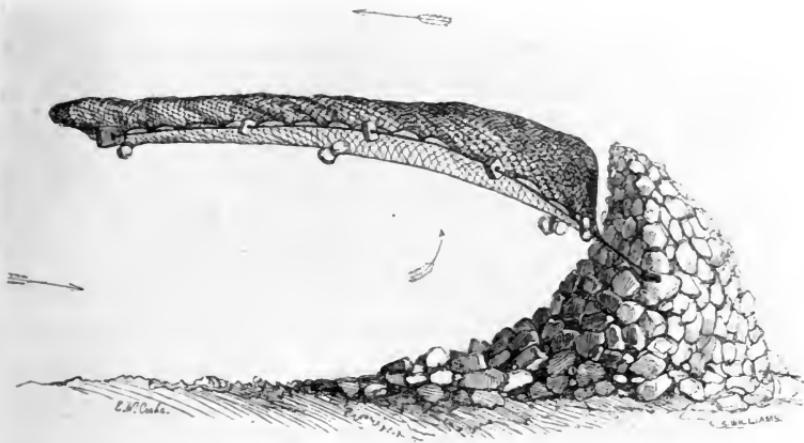
When fish are ascending the river the cairn net is very destructive. In the parts of the river most favourable for placing it a cairn is built, *as in the vignette*. This projection into the current makes the water comparatively still and easy below ; and Salmon in travelling naturally take to it, as finding there some relief to the labour of ascending. They pass between the net and the shore ; and endeavouring to get forwards at the point of the cairn become entangled in the net, and are taken in great quantities.\*

### THE SALMON TROUT

SALMO TRUTTA, *Linn.*

This fish is called by different names in various localities—*White Trout*, *Phinock*, *Sea Trout*, *Whitling*, *Hirling*. It is little inferior to the Salmon in flavour ; and being less rich, is I presume more wholesome. It is distinguished, says Mr. Yarrell, by the gill-cover being intermediate in its form between that of the Salmon, and Grey or Bull Trout. The teeth likewise are more slender, as well as more numerous than in those fish. The tail is less forked than in Salmon of

\* The changes that have come over the methods of catching salmon on the Tweed have been discussed in the Introduction.—(Ed.)



"Cairn Net."

(From a drawing by E. Cooke.)



"Otter devouring a Salmon."

(From a drawing by Edwin Landseer, R.A.)



the same age, and smaller in proportion, but becomes ultimately square at the end.\*

It is found in most, if not in all salmon rivers ; but it is now very scarce in the Tweed, which I attribute to the spates that are become more sudden and violent in that river than formerly, owing to a more complete drainage of the mountains and adjoining lands ; for these fish always prefer the smaller and less turbulent streams. Like the Salmon, it remains in the river two years before it puts on the migratory dress, and the males also shed their milt at eighteen months old, similar to the Parr (so called) of a corresponding age. The Orange Fin, for so the fry of the Sea Trout is called, so much resembles the common River Trout, that it is with very great difficulty it can be distinguished from it. Like the Gilse, it returns to the river the summer of its spring migration, weighing about a pound and a half upon an average. It afterwards increases about a pound and a half a year ; but is seldom seen above six or seven pounds, though it probably attains to a much greater weight.

By the aid of the cruive, Mr. Shaw traced this fish from the Orange Fin of three ounces to the Hirling or Whitling, up to the Sea Trout of seven pounds ; and he has now a specimen in his possession exhibiting the four several marks he had put on it in the course of its annual migrations. At the size of six pounds the central rays of the tail were considerably increased in length, so much so in the males that

\* Cf. note on the sea trout on p. 8.—(Ed.)

## 68 DAYS AND NIGHTS OF SALMON FISHING

their tails became actually rounded : the fish altogether at this time loses a great deal of its former elegance. The tails of the females of a corresponding age are more square, and their general shape is more slim.

These fish may be crossed with Salmon ; I mean that by artificial impregnation hybrids may be thus produced. Mr. Shaw says in a letter to me, dated November 25th, 1840 : "I put some of your suggestions regarding the ova of the Salmon, and the common Trout, Sea Trout, and Salmon, into practice about a month ago, and shall let you know the result." The following year I had the pleasure of a letter from him, dated October 14th, 1841, saying that "The hybrids which I produced by artificial impregnation last autumn are all in a very healthy state, the cross not having in the slightest degree affected their constitution. Those produced between the Salmon and the Salmon Trout (*Salmo Trutta*) appear to partake more of the external markings, silvery coating, and elegance of form of the Parr (young Salmon) than any of the others. Those produced between the Salmon and common Trout (*Salmo Fario*), and between the common Trout and Salmon Trout, have in every respect more the appearance of the common Trout than the former."

Some have imagined that the Whitling or Hirling are the young of the Bull Trout. But this is a mistake, as the Hirling abounds in the Annan, where the Bull Trout is very rarely seen ; and also in the Nith, where Mr. Shaw has never been able to discover one of the other species. Lord Home like-

wisè, whom I consider the very best practical authority, says, "The Whitling of the Tweed is the Salmon Trout, and not the young Bull Trout, which now goes by the name of Trout simply."

### THE GREY, BULL TROUT, OR ROUND TAIL SALMO ERIOX, *Linn.*

"The Grey Trout," says Mr. Yarrell, "is distinguished from the Salmon and Salmon Trout by several specific peculiarities. The gill-cover differs from them decidedly in form, and the teeth are longer and stronger." The tail grows square at an earlier period than in the Salmon ; and the central caudal rays continuing to elongate with age, the whole tail, originally concave, eventually becomes convex, and from thence it has been called the *Round Tail*. The elongation of the under jaw is peculiar to the males only, and is less than in the Salmon. The scales also are less, the shoulders thicker, and the tail more muscular. In short, it is altogether a more thick and powerful fish than the Salmon, and consequently gives the angler more sport ; but to the epicure it gives less, as it is inferior in flavour and colour, and if not very fresh from the sea its flesh is short and woolly. It is very much the colour of the Salmon, but tinted with grey or brown spots.

These fish are found in many salmon rivers, but not in all. It is very abundant in the Tweed, which it visits principally at two seasons ; in the spring

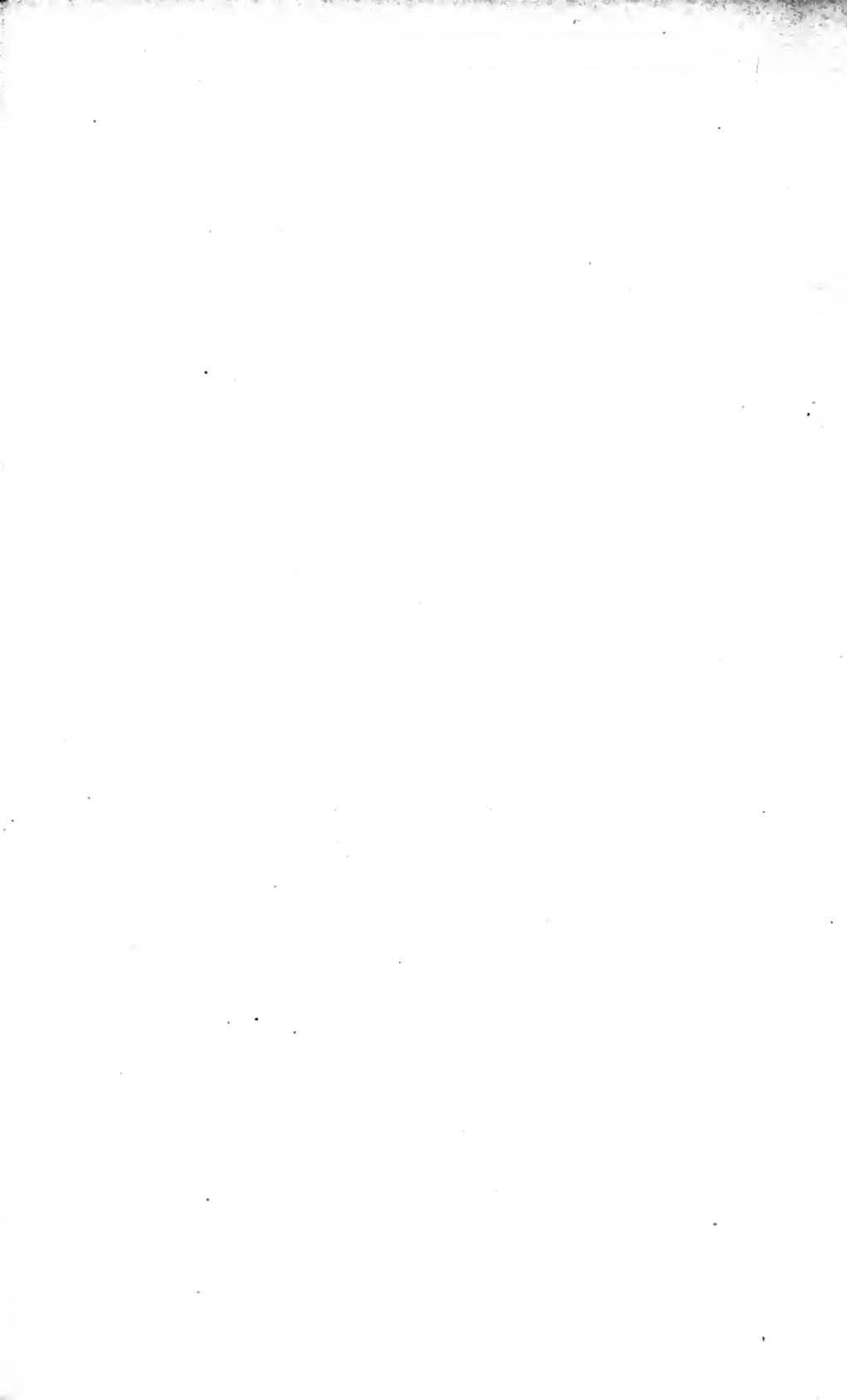
about the month of May, and again in the month of October, when the males are very plentiful ; but the females are scarce till about the beginning or middle of November. With Salmon it is the reverse, as their females leave the sea before the males. The Bull Trout is also more regular in his habits than the Salmon, for the fishermen can calculate almost to a day when the large black male Trouts will leave the sea. The foul fish rise eagerly at the fly, but the clean ones by no means so. They weigh from two to twenty-four pounds, and occasionally, I presume, but very rarely indeed, more. The largest I ever heard of was taken in the Hallowstell fishing water at the mouth of the Tweed, in April, 1840, and weighed twenty-three pounds and a half.

The heaviest Bull Trout I ever encountered myself weighed sixteen pounds, and I had a long and severe contest with his majesty. He was a clean fish, and I hooked him in a cast in Mertoun Water called the *Willow Bush*, not in the mouth, but in the dorsal fin. Brethren of the craft, guess what sore work I had with him ! He went here and there with apparent comfort and ease to his own person, but not to mine. I really did not know what to make of him. There never was such a hector. I cannot say exactly how long I had him on the hook ; it seemed a week at least. At length John Haliburton, who was then my fisherman, waded into the river up to his middle, and cleiked him whilst he was hanging in the stream, and before he was half beat.

Besides the three species I have mentioned, I have sometimes, though very rarely, caught a fish

ASCERTAINING THE WEIGHT





very similar in shape to the Grey or Bull Trout, but much cleaner, which the fishermen call a North-country Salmon. It is clearly not a Bull Trout, for that fish is as well known in the Tweed as the Salmon itself. I have no doubt but that it is rightly named, and a wanderer from the northern coasts.

I have also occasionally caught in the Tweed a small silver fish, between a quarter and half a pound, which seems of the Salmon tribe ; its flesh is of a pale pink, and good eating. In the river Isla I have taken many of them with a net.

I have now given a brief account of all the fish of the Salmon tribe in the Tweed, except the *Salmo Fario*, or common Trout, which I do not profess to treat of. Much more has been said by naturalists as to distinctive character and organisation. Whoever wishes for minute information on these points, cannot do better than consult the new edition of Mr. Yarrell's unrivalled work on British Fishes—a gentleman to whom I feel much indebted for some very liberal and scientific communications ; nor must they omit to look into the pages of a most highly entertaining and clever work lately published, called *The Rod and the Gun*.

I shall only add, that in allusion to the consequence attributed to these beautiful fish in the Tweed, and in consideration of the favourable places for spawning in the upper parts of the river, the Royal Burgh of Peebles wears for arms—vert, three salmon counter naiant in pale argent, with the motto, “ Contra nando Incrementum.”

In the arms of the city of Glasgow, and in those

of the ancient see, a salmon with a ring in its mouth is said to record a miracle of St. Kentigern, the founder of the see, and the first Bishop of Glasgow.

“They report,” says Spotswood, “of St. Kentigern, that a lady of good place in the country, having lost her ring as she crossed the river Clyde, and her husband waxing jealous, as if she had bestowed the same on one of her lovers, she did mean herself unto Kentigern, entreating his help for the safety of her honour ; and that he going to the river after he had used his devotion, willed one who was making to fish to bring the first fish he caught, which was done. In the mouth of this fish he found the ring, and, sending it to the lady, she was thereby freed of her husband’s suspicion.”

The classical tale of Polycrates, says the very clever author of *The Heraldry of Fish*, related by Herodotus a thousand years before the time of St. Kentigern, is, perhaps, the earliest version of the fish and the ring, which has been often repeated with variations. The ring, says Herodotus, was an emerald set in gold, and beautifully engraved, the work of Theodorus the Samian ; and this very ring, Pliny relates, was preserved in the Temple of Concord in Rome, to which it was given by the Emperor Augustus.

In the Koran of Mahomet the legend of the ring, and its recovery by means of a fish, is introduced. “Solomon entrusted his signet with one of his concubines, which the Devil obtained from her, and sat on the throne in Solomon’s shape. After forty

days the Devil departed, and threw the ring into the sea. The signet was swallowed by a fish, which being caught and given to Solomon, the ring was found in his belly, and thus he recovered his kingdom.”\*

\* Sale’s Translation of the Koran.

## CHAPTER III

"*Hostess.* Say what beast, thou knave thou.

*Falstaff.* What beast ! Why, an otter.

*Hostess.* An otter, Sir John ! why an otter ?

*Falstaff.* Why, she's neither fish nor flesh. A man knows not where to have her."

**B**EFORE I enter upon the practical part of Salmon Fishing, I will just say a few words about my natural tendency to the sport, to the end that it may be evident that my maxims are not drawn from books, but originate in my own experience.

I declare, then, that I, Harry Otter, am by nature a person of considerable aquatic propensities, having been born under the sign of Aquarius, or Pisces—it matters not which. My delight in water, however, has its limits, and extends only to external applications : the placid amusement of wading in a Salmon river is very much to my taste—quite captivating. Showers, and even storms, if not of too long a continuance, are exceedingly refreshing to my person ; but I must in candour admit that the decisive action of a water-spout may not possibly be so gratifying —*ne quid nimis.* Macintosh's invention I consider as wholly uncalled for, accounting it, as I do, an unpardonable intrusion to place a solution of Indian-rubber between the human body and a refreshing

element. It is like taking a shower-bath under shelter of an umbrella.

Thus far I can extend ; but desire me to drink water by itself, and I am your very humble servant. Had I been at a symposium of brandy and the said vapid element with that worthy Magnus Troil, he should not have drunk all the brandy himself, and put me off with the water, as he is recorded to have done to his very simple friend. I beg to say that I am not one of those two thousand patients who have been relieved by a *water cure*, administered by James Wilson, Esq., physician to his Serene Highness the Prince of Nassau, as advertised. Internally, in its pure state, I totally discard it. But I like the society of fish ; and as they cannot with any convenience to themselves visit me on dry land, it becomes me in point of courtesy to pay my respects to them in their own element.

Next to wading in water, comes, I think, the pastime of trudging over bogs and fens—ground intimately allied to it, and which Colonel Hawker has made quite classical. This is a sort of debateable land, and the natural inhabitants of it reject you with most unequivocal signs of disapprobation. The red shank, the pewet, the curlew, and all their allies, scream and dart around you, inhospitable as they are, and tell you, as plainly as bills can speak, to sheer off, and not invade their premises. But we are a sort of Paul Pry, and love to persist responding now and then with our double barrel, which we more especially direct towards the ruff, snipe, wild duck, and teal—birds whose merit we particularly appre-

ciate. Thus we are, as may be seen, of an amphibious nature, and respond to the fat knight's description, when he compared Hostess Quickly to our namesake. That this predilection for humidity is with me an instinct, may be seen from the following brief notice of my infant propensities.

When I was an urchin I stole off, and wandered up the stream that came winding through the verdant meadows of my native valley, till I arrived at the foot of the Castle Hill ; following the little path that dived into a thicket, and wound round its base near the margin of the river : thence, amongst irregular clumps of thorn bushes, holly trees, and other wild wood, stopping a while to gather the cowslips and white violets that dappled the sunny slopes, I pursued my way through a tangled thicket, whose branches overhung the stream. I remember even now that the sunbeam glittered on the leaves, struck through the masses here and there, and pierced to the surface of the water, which shone in spots through the gloom like the fragments of a broken mirror : these lucid touches caught my childish fancy ; but my favourite spot was not yet attained. Not until I had rounded the rib of the promontory on which stood the grey castle, and came to another face of it, did I obtain the object of my ramble. At this turn of the stream I found myself in a small lonely meadow sprinkled with cowslips, upon which opened two wooded valleys, each watered by a small stream, which at their junction washed out a deep hole ; and at the foot of the hole a small gravel heap was thrown up,

upon which grew the yellow iris, and some other vegetation. In Lilliput it would have been termed an island : so in truth it was. I know not how it happened—unless, indeed, that I was strictly enjoined not to go near the water—but I had a decided propensity to establish my little person on this insular spot. For some time I was either very good, or very much afraid—it matters not which—and the achievement was dubious. At length the demon of temptation appeared in the form of a dragon-fly, which, glancing from some branches that extended across the stream a little above, danced up and down in the air in all its gaudy trim, and at length settled on an iris in this enchanted island. I stood enraptured on the bank with my arms outstretched, and my longing eyes fixed upon the beauty. It was irresistible—I could hold out no longer. So mustering up my naughty courage, and letting myself gently down the bank, I paddled through a little shallow water, till I actually set foot safely on the desired spot. Here I found that my love for the *libella* was not mutual ; or, if it was, I may say,

“ Love, free as air, at sight of human ties  
Spreads its light wings, and in a moment flies.”

Even so did the dragon-fly : he and my hopes vanished at once. Nevertheless I showed a decided taste for an insular life, and sat down watching the trout rise on all sides, as happy as a king ; and I might have remained there to this day, had not that kill-joy Martha, who was blest with the care of me, and from whom I had escaped in the morning, come

upon my trail. Infuriated she was (for the whole Xantippe possessed her). She sallied forth like another Ceres in quest of her lost child. Half frightened, half pleased, I could see her toiling up the hill. "Master Harry! Master Harry!" resounded shrilly through the woods and valleys: even now methinks her voice rings in my ears. In vain—

"Nor at the lawn, nor at the wood, was he."

But when at length she returned, "alla solinga valle," I stood confessed within the range of her animated optics. She declared her sentiments without reserve in very fluent language. I was an *obstropolous* brat; a perfect *damon* (demon), as fond of dabbling in water as a *sallymander*. I should *catch it* when she got hold of me, that I should. This being intelligibly explained, I thought I would delay that period as long as possible. To all this eloquence, therefore, answer made I none; but I believe I looked and felt rather oddly. At length, seeing her amble to and fro upon the banks, and perceiving that she had the hydrophobia strong upon her, I told her if she wanted me she must come and fetch me, as I was forbidden to go into the water. "Hang your imperance, I says, Master Harry, but I'll find one as shall fetch you in a twinkling!" So saying, the eloquent Martha suited the action to the word, and ran round the turn of the river, where it seems she knew the keeper was fishing, who, I believe, in village phrase, "kept company with her." Down comes John, a good-natured fellow; tickles me with the point of his fishing rod

in gamesome mood ; makes two or three casts with his fly at me ; and at length wades to me, and places me on the mainland at the gentle Martha's side. Peace was made, but without promise for the future.

Henceforth, when I could escape control, I divided my time between the water and the meadows : in warm weather the water, in cold the land possessed me. Then I began to tamper with the minnows ; and, growing more ambitious, after a sleepless night full of high contrivance, I betook me at early dawn to a wood near the house, where I selected some of the straightest hazel sticks I could find, which I tied together and christened a fishing rod : a rude and uncouth weapon it was. I next sought out *Phyllis*, a favourite cow so called, in order to have a pluck at her tail to make a line with. But *Phyllis* was coy, and withheld her consent to spoliation ; for when I got hold of her posterior honours, she galloped off, dragging me along, tail in hand, till she left me deposited in a water-course amongst the frogs. The dairy-maid, I think, would have overcome this difficulty for me, had I not discovered that horse-hair, and not cow's tail, was the proper material for fishing lines ; so the coachman, who was much my friend, plucked *Champion* and *Dumplin*, at my request, and gave me as much hair (black enough to be sure) as would make a dozen lines. For three whole days did I twist and weave like the Fates, and for three whole nights did I dream of my work. Some rusty hooks I had originally in my possession, which I found in an old

fishing book belonging to my ancestors. In fact, I did not put the hook to the rod and line, but my rod and line to the hook. I next proceeded to the pigeon-house, and picking some coarse feathers, made what I alone in the wide world would have thought it becoming to have called a fly ; but call it so I did, in spite of contradictory evidence. Thus equipped, I proceeded to try my skill ; but exert myself as I would, the line had domestic qualities, and was resolved to stay at home. I never could get it fairly away from the hazel sticks ; therefore it was that I hooked no fish. But I hooked myself three times : once in the knee-strings of my shorts, once in the nostril, and again in the lobe of the ear. At length, after sundry days of fruitless effort, like an infant Belial, I attempted that by guile which I could not do by force ; and dropping the fly with my hand under a steep bank of the stream, I walked up and down trailing it along : after about a week's perseverance, I actually caught a trout. Shade of Izaak Walton, what a triumph was there ! That day I could not eat—that night I slept not. Even now I recollect the spot where that generous fish devoted himself.

As I grew up I became gradually more expert, and at length saved money sufficient to buy a real fishing rod, line, reel and all, quite complete. Down it came from London resplendent with varnish, and many cunning feats did I perform with it. About this time I learned to shoot ; not that I was strong enough to hold a gun, but that the keeper put the said implement to his shoulder, when I took aim at larks

and sparrows, and those sort of things, and pulled the trigger. So I waxed in years and wisdom. All the time I could steal from my lessons (for I was not quite a Pawnee) I spent in this edifying manner ; at length I was fully initiated in all the mysteries of sporting by a relation, himself the prince of sportsmen, who took a fancy to me. The reason was as follows :—

In the depth of winter, the ground being smothered with snow, and the blast bitter, I followed him out a wild-fowl shooting. I was devoid of hat, an article that I looked upon as superfluous, and that I always lost or mislaid as soon as it was given me. Equipped I was in white cotton stockings ; and my shoes, which were of the thinnest, I had tied to my feet with a string which passed over the instep. I could not put them up at heel with any comfort, because I had large chilblains there, which were broke. At length, after creeping a space on my gloveless hands and knees in the snow, and under cover of some sedge and willow bushes, up flew some wild ducks before my patron. “ Quack, quack ! ”—down came one to his shot, and fell with a splash into the river. In I plunged after him like a Newfoundland dog : you might have heard the flounce in a still day at Chippenham, about six miles off. The duck not being dead, made a swim and a dive of it. Long and dubious was the chase ; but in the end I descried his bill amongst the sedges, where he had poked it up to take a little breath. Making a dexterous snatch, I seized him underneath by the legs—Chinese fashion, with the exception of the pumpkin

—and drew him loud quacking to the bank. When landed I squeezed my clothes a little, according to order ; but I do not believe that I benefited my chilblains.

At a rather more advanced period of my life I used to make long fishing excursions, generally with prosperous, but occasionally with disastrous results. I remember well, when a pair of bait-hooks was to me a valuable concern, I hooked two large black-looking trouts in a deep pool at the same time. As I had to pull them several feet upwards against the pressure of the stream, my line gave way, and left me proprietor of a small fragment only. For some time I looked alternately at my widowed rod and my departed fish ; which last were coursing it round and round the pool, pulling in opposite directions, like coupled dogs of dissenting opinions : Durum—*sed levius fit patientiâ*. So I sat down with somewhat of a rueful countenance, and began to spin with my fingers some horse-hair which I had pulled that morning, at the risk of my life, from the grey colt's tail. This being done in my own peculiar manner, and my only remaining hook being tied on with one of the aforesaid hairs, I continued to follow my sport down the stream for about half a mile. After the lapse of a considerable time, I had occasion to cross bare-legged from one bank to the other. In my transit through the current, I found something like a sharp instrument cutting the calves of my legs. I scampered ashore, under the impression that I was trailing after me some sharp-toothed monster, perhaps a lamper eel ; when,

upon passing down my hand to ascertain the fact, I found to my great astonishment and delight that I was once more in possession of my lost line, hooks, fish, and all. The fish had fairly drowned each other, and, by a curious coincidence, were passively passing in the current at the time my legs stemmed it.

Originally I had what in Scotland is called a *poke* or bag to carry my trouts in. This being rather of a coarse appearance, I panted after a basket. One of my school-fellows had exactly the thing ; and I bargained for it by giving in return all my personal right in perpetuity to two young hawks. Proud of my acquisition, I set out with no small share of vanity, carrying my basket through the whole length of a neighbouring village, which was considerably out of the way. When I arrived at the happy spot where my sport lay, I was successful as usual. At length the declining sun admonished me of some ten miles betwixt me and home ; so I resolved only to take a few casts in a dark and deep pool which was close at hand, and then to bend my course homeward. There I hooked a fine fish, which I was obliged to play for some time, and then, after he was fairly tired, to lift out with my hands, not having yet arrived at the dignity of a landing net. In stooping low to perform this process, the lid of my new pet basket, which from want of experience I had omitted to fasten, flew open, and two or three of my last-killed fish dropped into the deep water immediately before me. In suddenly reaching forward to secure these, round came my basket, fish and all, over my head, and fairly capsized me.

With some difficulty, and even risk of drowning, I got my head above water, and my hand on the crown of a sharp rock. There I stood, streaming and disconsolate, casting a wistful look at the late bright inmates of my basket, which were tilting down the weeds through the gullet into a tremendous pool, vulgarly called Hell's Cauldron. Into that same pool with the ominous name had I myself very nearly passed, and thus had followed my hat, which was coursing about in the eddy or wheel of this fearful depth. Thus vanished before my eyes my whole day's sport, for dead fish immediately sink ; and it was not without some skilful fishing up that my hat and I renewed our acquaintance. I have before observed that when I was quite an urchin I never wore a hat, or any covering over my hair ; but as I grew older I thought it decorous to follow the fashion.

At another time, whilst still a *puer*, and only possessed of one single bait-hook, to my utter confusion I found that solitary hook had been swallowed by a duck, which a mass of sedges under the bank had concealed from my view. There we were, Mrs. Duck and I, dashing, swashing, and swatting down the stream ; the duck all the time declaring his sentiments by the utterance of a fearful noise, and I endeavouring by every means in my power to prevent my only hook from being ravished from me by my feathered opponent. In the meantime a group of lasses, who were washing clothes at the river side, and were friendly to the bird, set upon me, first with their tongues, of the use of which they seemed to be in full possession, and latterly with



"Mermaids and Fly."  
(From a drawing by E. Cooke.)



"I saw young Harry with his beaver off."  
(From a drawing by William Simson.)



their pails and watering pans ; in consequence of which I was compelled to snap my line, and turn upon my fair tormentors. But let no boy of fourteen ever try to face a batch of lasses. In fine, I was terribly mauled, and did not feel my ears at all comfortable in their externals for a considerable time afterwards.

But enough of these idle anecdotes. The reader will now understand that I, Harry Otter, was an idle scamp. If he chooses to keep company with me in my rambles, he will, nevertheless, find no very particular harm in me, and I on my part shall be delighted to hold good fellowship with an indulgent brother of the craft.

## CHAPTER IV

" I in these flowery meads would be ;  
These crystal streams shall solace me."

MUCH has been said by various humane persons about the cruelty of fishing ; but setting aside that, according to the authority of the eminent author of *Salmonia*, and of Dr. Gillespie also, who, by-the-by, is professor of humanity at St. Andrew's, fish seldom feel any pain from the hook. Let us see how the case stands. I take a little wool and feather, and, tying it in a particular manner upon a hook, make an imitation of a fly ; then I throw it across the river, and let it sweep round the stream with a lively motion. This I have an undoubted right to do, for the river belongs to me or my friend ; but mark what follows. Up starts a monster fish with his murderous jaws, and makes a dash at my little Andromeda. Thus he is the aggressor, not I ; his intention is evidently to commit murder. He is caught in the act of putting that intention into execution. Having wantonly intruded himself on my hook, which I contend he had no right to do, he darts about in various directions, evidently surprised to find that the fly, which he hoped to make an easy conquest of, is much stronger than

himself. I naturally attempt to regain this fly, unjustly withheld from me. The fish gets tired and weak in his lawless endeavours to deprive me of it. I take advantage of his weakness, I own, and drag him, somewhat loth, to the shore, where one rap at the back of the head ends him in an instant. If he is a trout, I find his stomach distended with flies. That beautiful one called the May-fly, who is by nature almost ephemeral—who rises up from the bottom of the shallows, spreads its light wings, and flits in the sunbeam in enjoyment of its new existence—no sooner descends to the surface of the water to deposit its eggs, than the unfeeling fish at one fell spring numbers him prematurely with the dead. You see, then, what a wretch a fish is ; no ogre is more bloodthirsty, for he will devour his nephews, nieces, and even his own children, when he can catch them ; and I take some credit for having shown him up. Talk of a wolf, indeed, a lion, or a tiger ! Why these are all mild and saintly in comparison with a fish. When did any one hear of Messrs. Wolf, Lion, and Co. eating up their grandchildren ? What a bitter fright must the smaller fry live in ! They crowd to the shallows, lie hid among the weeds, and dare not say the river is their own. I relieve them of their apprehensions, and thus become popular with the small shoals.

When we see a fish quivering upon dry land, he looks so helpless without arms or legs, and so demure in expression, adding hypocrisy to his other sins, that we naturally pity him ; then kill and eat him with Hervey sauce, perhaps. Our pity is

misplaced—the fish is not. There is an immense trout in Loch Awe in Scotland, which is so voracious, and swallows his own species with such avidity, that he has obtained the name of *Salmo ferox*. I pull about this unnatural monster till he is tired, land him, and give him the *coup de grace*. Is this cruel? Cruelty “should be made of sterner stuff.” There is a certain spurious sort of humanity going about that I cannot understand. Thus I know a lady who will not eat game, because, she says, shooting is a cruel amusement; but she is very much addicted to fowls, and all domestic poultry, feeding them one day, and eating them up the next, with treacherous alacrity and amiable perseverance. It would be more candid in her, therefore, to say to us sportsmen, like the fox in the fable—

“ Go, but be moderate in your food;  
A pheasant too might do me good.”

“ I once saw,” says the learned and accomplished Dr. Gillespie, “ one of these all-devouring fish in a curious predicament. In fishing, or rather strolling, within these few years, with a rod in one hand and a book in the other, so as to alternate reading and fishing, as the clouds came and went, I observed a great many June-flies, at which the fish were occasionally rising, and which at the same time were picked up by the swallows, as they skimmed over the surface of the still water. It so happened that a trout from beneath, and a swallow from above, had fixed their affections upon the same yellow-winged and tempting fly. Down came the

swallow, and up came the open mouth of the fish ; into which, in pursuit of his prey, the swallow pitched his head. The struggle was not long, but pretty severe ; and the swallow was once or twice nearly immersed, wings and all, in the water, before he got himself disentangled from the sharp teeth of the fish.” It is true that the trout had no intention of encountering the bird ; but every one knows that pike will pull young ducks under the water, and devour them.

“ The Tay trout,” says John Crerar (I copy from his MS.), “ lives in that river all the year round. It is a large and yellow fish, with a great mouth, and feeds chiefly on salmon spawn, moles, mice, frogs, etc. A curious circumstance once happened to me at Pulney Loch. One of my sons threw a live mouse into it, when a large trout took the mouse down immediately. The boy told me what had happened ; so I took my fishing rod, which was leaning against my house close to the loch, and put a fly on. At the very first throw I hooked a large trout, landed it, and laid it on the walk : in two seconds the mouse ran out of its mouth, and got into a hole in the wall before I could catch it.” Thus far John Crerar.

“ The mouse that is content with one poor hole  
Can never be a mouse of any soul.”

I believe every author on the subject, from the time of dear Isaak Walton to the present day, has taken some pains to vindicate the amusement of angling. For this purpose they have quoted men

eminent for humanity, illustrious for science, and famed for high achievement—philosophers, warriors, divines—who have been dear lovers of the sport.\* But does it require this vindication? For myself, far from being surprised that distinguished men have delighted in fishing, I only wonder that any man can be illustrious who does not practise either angling or field sports of some sort or another. They all demand skill and enterprise. If you ask me to reconcile angling to reason, you may possibly distress me. It is an instinct, a passion, and a powerful one, originally given to man for the preservation of his existence. The waters as well as the land yield forth their increase. In the joyless regions of the north, when the bear famishes on the iceberg, and the gaunt wolf howls amongst the snow-drifts, the miserable tenant of the land stalks along the desolate shores, and with his javelin, or hooks of bone, acquires by his rude skill a precarious subsistence for his family. Everlasting winter has stamped his iron foot upon the soil: the snow whitens all interminably, except where the blasts drive it from the face of the bleak rocks; and without this resource he must perish—he and his sad family together. Even so it is ordained from above.

Thrice happy are we, who live in a more genial

\* When Sir Humphrey Davy was at Gisburn, the late Lord Ribblesdale took him to see the celebrated Gorsdale Rocks, expecting they would astonish and interest him, and call forth some very learned remarks; but the great philosopher noticed only the stream beneath them, which he scrutinised minutely, saying he was sure there were no fish in it, or he should have discovered them.

climate, and who inherit the instinct given to our less fortunate fellow-creatures, and exercise it not from hard necessity, but as a means of recreation. Man being thus evidently destined to fish, let us consider the style of thing that is likely to give him the most gratification.

When I read of the whale fishery, and of that animal running out a mile of rope, for an instant my thoughts were bent on the seas of Greenland ; but I was taken aback by the frontispiece of Captain Scoresby's entertaining narrative, which represents his boat thrown aloft in the air by a playful jerk of a whale's tail, and all the crew tumbling seaward in very sprawling and unstudied attitudes. Now this is a sort of adventure which I do not covet myself, or recommend others to seek. In such case, perhaps, the heroes of the harpoon might be caught at their descent by some ravenous shark ; and unless people have a curiosity about the construction of that animal's intestines for the sake of scientific purposes, a visit to his interior would be useless, and I think imprudent. Besides, whale fishery is a sort of unsavoury butchery, which does not suit all tastes. We will take leave, therefore, to discard it at once.

The truth is, that I like no sea fishing whatever, being of opinion that it requires little skill ; neither do I enjoy sailing in the salt element, for very particular reasons relating to health. But my mind is full of solemn thoughts as I stand on the sounding shore, and see the gallant vessel pass away into the great desert of waters, till her misty hull rests lonely

in the horizon. Then, as shades of night set in, and as she fades in the general gloom, I meditate on the perils of storm and battle, and all the adventurous scenes her crew may encounter, for good or for evil—far, far away from the land of their affections.\*

“ Nos patriam fugimus, nos dulcia linquimus arva :  
Nos patriam fugimus.”

No ; the wild main I trust not. Rather let me wander beside the banks of the tranquil streams of the warm South, “ in yellow meads of asphodel,” when the young spring comes forth, and all nature is glad ; or if a wilder mood comes over me, let me clamber among the steeps of the North, beneath the shaggy mountains, where the river comes raging and foaming everlastingily, wedging its way through the secret glen, whilst the eagle, but dimly seen, cleaves the winds and the clouds, and the dun deer gaze from the mosses above. There, amongst gigantic rocks, and the din of mountain torrents, let me do battle with the lusty salmon, till I drag him into day, rejoicing in his bulk, voluminous and vast.

But, alas ! we run riot. Let me now set forth by what chance I became a fisher for salmon. Dining one auspicious day with a friend in London,

\* Sea angling has become a very different thing since Scrope wrote thus coolly of it, and nowadays it is almost as highly specialised as fresh-water fishing. The capture of fish like grey mullet, bass and black bream can be a very pretty art and it calls for both delicacy and skill. What is known as “ big game ” fishing is a further development. Tuna, sword fish, big sea bass and other monsters afford very exciting sport in various parts of the world.—(ED.)

after a sultry morning gratifying to nothing but a lizard or a serpent—the town hot, still, and deserted, as the ruins of Pompeii—we turned from the base thraldom to which we had subjected ourselves, and resolved to wander over the blue hills of Scotland ; “ for we had heard of *grouse-shooting*, and we longed to follow in the field some lusty *heath-cock*.” It was Wednesday. On Friday we would depart, that was certain ; for we were young and ardent. Our travelling means were not very rich : they consisted of a curricle with one horse (his companion having died lately), and a tilbury without any. But the next day there was to be a sale at Tattersall’s, which all juveniles delight in ; so away we went to the hammer, rejoicing in our *soi disant* judgment, and purchased two animals most indubitably of the horse species. My friend accommodated himself with a chestnut, I with a mottled grey ; and it would be difficult to say which of the two had the best bargain.

Now it chanced that these two nags never had harness on their backs from the time of their foal-hood ; but this did not interest us in the least : they had it on soon at all events, all at the door of Thomas’s Hotel, Berkeley Square. The chestnut shone as off-horse in the curricle, the grey was resplendent in the tilbury. As for the start, I cannot boast much of that—kicks, plunges, rearings to match. There was evidently some misunderstanding. My fellow-traveller, wheeling round in spite of “ curb or rein,” passed me in an opposite direction. My thoughts were intent on Davies

Street : the *grey* differed with me widely in opinion, and was ambitious of the Square ; round which (if I may use the expression) he galloped with unnecessary haste, till he met my fellow-traveller at the bottom, and we passed each other in grand style, our nags being considerably animated by the “ lumbering of the wheels.” Not once alone did this happen ; and before our coursers could be gained over to our opinion, Charing Cross possessed the curriicle, and Hanover Square could boast of the tilbury. Our skill might reasonably be questioned—our perseverance could not ; for before midnight we rallied, and urged our reluctant beasts to the dulness of Stilton. From henceforth everything went on smoothly with them ; except that the chestnut died of the distemper, and the grey fell out of a crazy boat into Loch Lomond, ran away some time afterwards, overturned the vehicle, broke my unfortunate servant’s leg, and lamed himself for life.

We journeyed on to Selkirk in juvenile mood. From hence my friends went to Edinburgh, where I agreed to join them. And now comes the point—what made me, Harry Otter, a fisher for salmon ? Why thus it was—I went forth, after my arrival at the aforesaid town, at the hour of prime. I asked no questions, for I cannot endure to hear beforehand what sort of sport I am likely to have. Sober truth is sometimes exceedingly distressing, and brings one’s mind to a lull ; it puts an end to the sublimity of extravagant speculation, which I hold to be the chief duty of a sportsman. So, as I said, I asked no questions ; but I saw the river Ettrick before me

taking her free course beneath the misty hills, and, brushing away the dew-drops with my steps, I rushed impatiently through the broom and gorse with torn hose and smarting legs, till I arrived at the margin of that wild river, where the birch hung its ringlets over the waters.

Out came my trusty rod from a case of "filthy dowlass." Top varnished it was, and the work of the famous Higginbotham : not he the hero of an hundred engines, "who was *afeard* of nothing, and whose fireman's soul was all on fire" ; but Higginbotham of the Strand, who was such an artist in the rod line as never appeared before, or has ever been seen since. "He never joyed since the price of *hickory wood* rose," and was soon after gathered to the tomb of his fathers. I look upon him, and old Kirby the quondam maker of hooks, to be two of the greatest men the world ever saw ; not even excepting Eustace Ude, or Michael Angelo Bonarotti.

But to business. The rod was hastily put together ; a beautiful new azure line passed through the rings ; a casting line, made like the waist of Prior's Emma, appended, with two trout flies attached to it of the manufacture even of me, Harry Otter. An eager throw to begin with : round came the flies intact. Three, four, five, six throws—a dozen : no better result. The fish were stern and contemptuous. At length some favourable change took place in the clouds, or atmosphere, and I caught sundry small trout ; and finally, in the cheek of a boiler, I fairly hauled out a two-pounder. A jewel of a fish he was —quite a treasure all over. After I had performed

the satisfactory office of bagging him, I came to a part of the river which, being contracted, rushed forward in a heap, rolling with great impetuosity. Here, after a little flogging, I hooked a lusty fellow, strong as an elephant, and swift as a thunderbolt. How I was agitated say ye who best can tell, ye fellow tyros ! Every moment did I expect my trout tackle, for such it was, to part company. At length, after various runs of dubious result, the caitiff began to yield ; and at the expiration of about half an hour, I wooed him to the shore. What a sight then struck my optics ! A fair five-pounder at the least ; not fisherman's weight, mark me, but such as would pass muster with the most conscientious lord mayor of London during the high price of bread. Long did I gaze on him, not without self-applause. All too large he was for my basket ; I therefore laid the darling at full length on the ground, under a birch tree, and covered over the precious deposit with some wet bracken, that it might not suffer from the sunbeam.

I had not long completed this immortal achievement ere I saw a native approaching, armed with a prodigious fishing rod of simple construction guiltless of colour or varnish. He had a belt round his waist, to which was fastened a large wooden reel or pirn, and the line passed from it through the rings of his rod : a sort of Wat Tinlinn he was to look at. The whole affair seemed so primitive—there was such an absolute indigence of ornament, and poverty of conception, that I felt somewhat fastidious about it. I could not, however, let a brother of the craft pass

unnoticed, albeit somewhat rude in his attire ; so, "What sport," said I, "my good friend?"

"I canna say that I hae had muckle deversion ; for she is quite fallen in, and there wull be no good fishing till there comes a spate."

Now, after this remark, I waxed more proud of my success ; but I did not come down upon him at once with it, but said somewhat slyly, and with mock modesty—

"Then you think there is not much chance for any one, and least of all for a stranger like myself."

"I dinna think the like o' ye can do muckle ; though I will no say but ye may light on a wee bit trout, or may be on a happening fish. That's a bonny little wand you've got ; and she shimmers so with varnish, that I'm thinking that when she is in the eye o' the sun the fish will come aneath her, as they do to the blaze in the water."

Sandy was evidently lampooning my Higginbotham. I therefore replied, that she certainly had more shining qualities than were often met with on the northern side of the Tweed. At this personality, my pleasant friend took out a large mull from his pocket, and, applying a copious quantity of its contents to his nose, very politely responded—

"Ye needna fash yoursel to observe aboot the like o' her ; she is no worth this pinch o' snuff."

He then very courteously handed his mull to me.

"Well," said I, still modestly, "she will do well enough for a bungler like me." I was trolling for a compliment.

"Ay, that will she," said he.

Though a little mortified, I was not sorry to get him to this point ; for I knew I could overwhelm him with facts, and the more diffidently I conducted myself the more complete would be my triumph. So laying down my pet rod on the channel, I very deliberately took out my two-pounder, as a feeler. He looked particularly well ; for I had tied up his mouth, that he might keep his shape, and moistened him, as I before said, with soaked fern to preserve his colour. I fear I looked a little elate on the occasion ; assuredly I felt so.

“There’s a fine fish now—a perfect beauty ! ”

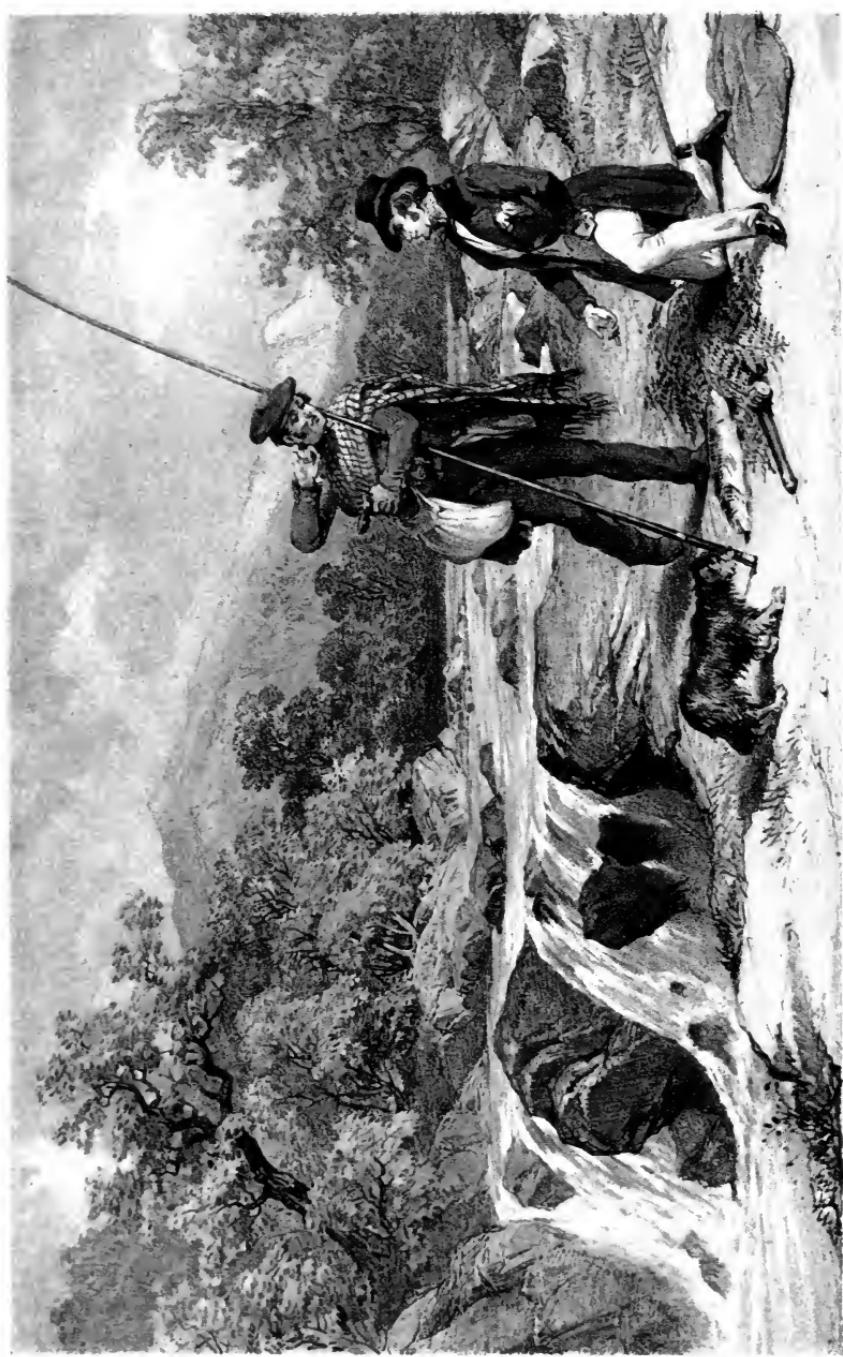
“Houte-toute ! that’s no fish ava.”

“No fish, man ! What the deuce is it, then ? Is it a rabbit, or a wild duck, or a water-rat ? ”

“Ye are joost gin daft. Do ye no ken a troot when ye see it ? ”

I could make nothing of this answer, for I thought that a trout was a fish ;\* but it seems I was mistaken. However, I saw the envy of the man ; so I determined to inflict him with a settler at once. For this purpose I inveigled him to where my five-pounder was deposited ; then kneeling down, and proudly removing the bracken I had placed over him, there lay the monster most manifest, extended in all his glory. The light—the eye of the landscape—before whose brilliant sides Runjeet Sing’s diamond, called “the mountain of light,” would sink into the deep obscure ; dazzled with the magnifi-

\* Salmon, salmon trout, and bull trout alone, are called *fish* in the Tweed. If a Scotchman means to try for trout, he does not say “I am going a *fishing*,” but “I am going a *trouting*.”



THERE'S A FINE FISH NOW!

Chas. Landseer, del.



cent sight, I chuckled in the plenitude of victory. This was unbecoming in me, I own, for I should have borne my faculties meekly ; but I was young and sanguine ; so (*horresco referens*) I gave a smart turn of my body, and, placing an arm akimbo, said, in an exulting tone, and with a scrutinising look, " There, what do you think of that ? " I did not see the astonishment in Sawny's face that I had anticipated, neither did he seem to regard me with the least degree of veneration ; but, giving my pet a shove with his nasty iron-shod shoes, he simply said,

" Houte ! that's a wee bit gilse."

This was laconic. I could hold no longer, for I hate a detractor ; so I roundly told him that I did not think he had ever caught so large a fish in all his life.

" Did you, now ?—own."

" I suppose I have."

" Suppose ! But don't you know ? "

" I suppose I have."

" Speak decidedly, yes or no. That is no answer."

" Well, then, I suppose\* I have."

And this was the sum total of what I could extract from this *nil admirari* fellow.

A third person now joined us, whom I afterwards discovered to be the renter of that part of the river. He had a rod and tackle of the selfsame fashion with the apathetic man. He touched his bonnet to me ; and if he did not eye me with approval, at least he did not look envious or sarcastic.

\* *Suppose*, in Scotch, does not imply a doubt, but denotes a certainty.

## 100 DAYS AND NIGHTS OF SALMON FISHING

"Well, Sandy," said he to his piscatorial friend, my new acquaintance, "what luck the morn?"

"I canna speecify that I hae had muckle; for they hae bin at the sheep-washing up bye, and she is foul, ye ken. But I hae ta'en twa saumon—ane wi' Nancy,\* and the ither wi' a Toppy†—baith in Faldon-side Burn fut."

And twisting round a coarse linen bag which was slung at his back, and which I had supposed to contain some common lumber, he drew forth by the tail a never-ending monster of a salmon, dazzling and lusty to the view; and then a second, fit consort to the first. Could you believe it? One proved to be fifteen pounds, and the other twelve! At the sudden appearance of these whales I was shivered to atoms: dumb-founded I was, like the Laird of Cockpen when Mrs. Jean refused the honour of his hand. I felt as small as Flimnap the treasurer in the presence of Gulliver. Little did I say; but that little, I hope, was becoming a youth in my situation.

I was now fairly vaccinated. By dint of snuff and whiskey, I made an alliance with the tenant of the water; and being engaged for that year to join my friends at Edinburgh, and go on a shooting excursion to the Hebrides and the north of Scotland, I resolved to revisit the Tweed the summer following.

It was the above incident that regulated my residence, in a great measure, for above twenty years of my life.

\* A fly so called from Nancy Dawson, who was born on the Tweed, near Little Dean Tower.

† The Toppy will be described hereafter.

A year had rolled on since this my first excursion to the North, and I, Harry Otter, was again seated in an open vehicle, enriched with fishing rods, both of small and of ample dimensions ; I must say exceedingly ample. The stanch *Arno* lay at my feet ; nor was I deficient in a gun, such as Manton used to turn out in that age of flint. My attendant, or groom, was of the freshest fashion—a youth newly hired. John, who was whilom in my service, understood the arts of travelling better than this man. But, alas ! John was a backslider ; for when I asked him if he had any objection to go to Scotland, “ Pray, sir,” said he, “ is that the country as is infested with eagles ? ” I candidly confessed that there certainly were birds of that description there. “ Then, I am sorry, sir, but I must beg leave to decline going,” was his valorous reply.

Tedious it were to recount the dawdling of a long journey performed by the same man and the same horses. I will not therefore utter such an infliction. It is quite enough to say, that in the end I ensconced myself in an hostel in the little town of Melrose : inn, properly so called, there was none, for Melrose was then unsung. It was late, and I looked forth on the tranquil scene from my window. The moonbeams played upon the distant hill-tops, but the lower masses slept as yet in shadow ; again the pale light catched the waters of the Tweed, the lapse of whose streams fell faintly on the ear, like the murmuring of a sea-shell. In front rose up the mouldering abbey, deep in shadow ; its pinnacles, and buttresses, and light tracery, but dimly seen in the

solemn mass. A faint light twinkled for a space among the tombstones ; soon it was extinct, and two figures passed off in the shadow, who had been digging a grave even at that late hour.

As the night advanced, a change began to take place. Clouds heaved up over the horizon ; the wind was heard in murmurs ; the rack hurried athwart the moon ; and utter darkness fell upon river, mountain, and haugh. Then the gust swelled louder, and the storm struck fierce and sudden against the casement. But as the morrow dawned, though the rain-drops still hung upon the leaf, the clouds sailed away, the sun broke forth, and all was fair and tranquil.

The fisherman was sent for express. His apparel may be taken as a general sample of the garb of the piscator on that river, where “ Flora discloses her beauties ” *par excellence*. A hat with salmon flies round the crown, the loop of each gut being passed over the head of a pin stuck into the said hat, and the barb of the hook fastened into the felt. The bonnet on such occasions is laid aside. A short coat or jacket ; waistcoat according to fancy ; blue pantaloons ; and a pair of colossal shoes, studded with splatter-headed nails.

“ Well, Wattie, I am glad you are come ; for you shall see me catch a dozen salmon to-day.”

“ You mun be a warlock then ; for the deil a mon atween Bolside and Kelso, beside yoursel, wull tak ae saumon the day. If ye were even to throw the Lady\* of Mertoun into the water, they wud na look

\* The Flower of Yarrow, married to Scott of Harden.

at her ; for the storm cam from the wast last nigght ye ken, and she\* wull be waxing the morn ; but we can gang doon to her and see." Down we accordingly went, and she was decidedly waxing, he said.

All this was a mystery to me at that time ; but I learned from him that when the river is about to flood, the rain that has fallen near its sources comes pouring down from the gulleys and drains, and propels the clear water before it, which then climbs the dry stones of the channel, exhibiting a convex surface, like wine in a glass filled to the brim. This effect cannot be perceived where the river is in quick motion : but in the little bays and pools that are here and there in the channel, it is very visible : the water will rise to some height before it is in the slightest degree discoloured, and this in proportion to the quantity of rain that has fallen near the sources ; so that a stranger would not notice the change. In strong spates it is afterwards of a reddish cast, and fines by degrees into a porter colour, which gets clearer and clearer till it resumes its wonted transparency. It must be noted that I speak with reference to the Tweed only ; for it is obvious that every river is coloured somewhat differently, according to the nature of the soil from which, and through which, it flows. Thus the Tay partakes much of the dark moss and peat colour ; and on part of the Inverness coast, where some of the rivers come from a hard stony soil, they are never much discoloured, or, if discoloured, in a different manner.

\* The Tweed, like a ship, is always called *she*, the feminine gender giving it its due consequence.

Thus the fisherman is kept two or three days from his sport. And he may as well go home when the waxing begins, though the water is clear, and the rise is imperceptible, except in the way I have mentioned ; for it is a singular truth that the salmon will not take the fly into his mouth when this change takes place, though he will often rise to it, and leap over it. This fact is so well known, that no experienced person on the Tweed thinks of fishing during such an occurrence. This waxing commences sooner or later, according to the violence or quantity of the rain that has fallen, and the situation where the storm breaks. In a moderate spate, with a westerly wind, it is seen at Melrose about ten or twelve hours after the rain, more or less. If the wind is very violent, also, the water which is blown out of the lakes will make the river rise slightly ; but in that case no change of colour will afterwards take place.\*

“ Ye can no fish the day ; so I wud hae ye advised to gang after the patrigs.”

So indeed I did, *auspice* Wattie, who, to my surprise, seemed somewhat loth to attend me. We found birds—Arno stood—we shot to the top of our bent ; and Wattie would have marked well, but for one failing, which, lover as he was of the sport, he could not overcome. This failing, to call it by the mildest name, was an apprehension of evil, which possessed him to that absurd degree that he sculked

\* I do not think that this is an invariable rule. I have found the *first* of a rise a very likely time for killing a fish on several rivers, especially after a longish drought. It undoubtedly wakes the salmon up. But when the colour begins to come down the chance lessens rapidly.—(ED.)

astern, and lay upon the ground the moment he expected a shot to be fired ; and I verily believe that he stopped his ears also. Once, when a covey spread beautifully amongst some gorse, for a space he eluded my vision, and when the firing ceased, I detected him in his form couched between two blocks of granite ; " for he kent," he said, " that it was no canny to dander aboot, and disturb the patrigs." And I think this was judicious ; but it did not seem to account for the paleness of his complexion.

My bag was now sufficiently full ; and in returning to the hotel I noticed the form of the Eildon Hills, which, we have since been credibly informed, were cloven in three by the art of gramarye. It was then that I discovered that my companion's mind was completely subdued by superstition.

" Thae hills are pleasant to the view," said he ; " and it is the custom on the seventh day for people to ascend the middle one, and enjoy the prospect. On the last Sabbath I gaed up ; and instead of the hill being throng as usual, I fund mysel alone, and when I was near the tap a sudden mirkness cam owre me, and I sat doon on the sod in a cauld sweet. Then I cast my een up ; and I saw, as plain as I see ye the noo, twa men houking a grave by the light of a torch ; and ither men joined them, walking twa by twa, wi' pale lights. And when they cam to the grave, they gaed to the far side of it ; and an auld wife cam in front wi' a lang white stick in her hand, and a light like a star a tap o' it : she had an awfu' beard, and beckoned me to the grave. Ou it

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was dreadfu' ! I believe I swooned away, as it was  
rigcht I should ; and when I cam to mysel, all was  
vanishit, and it was as mirk as pick. And a' this day  
I thought that your gun was the instrument that  
was to pit me intill that grave."

## CHAPTER V

“ And far beneath in lustre wan  
Old Melros’ rose, and fair Tweed ran.”

*Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

MY first visit to the Tweed was before the Minstrel of the North had sung those strains which enchanted the world, and attracted people of all ranks to this land of romance. The scenery therefore at that time, unassisted by story, lost its chief interest ; yet was it all lovely in its native charms. What stranger just emerging from the angular enclosures of the South, scored and subdued by tillage, would not feel his heart expand at the first sight of the heathery mountains, swelling out into vast proportions, over which man has had no dominion ? At the dawn of day he sees, perhaps, the mist ascending slowly up the dusky river, taking its departure to some distant undefined region ; below the mountain range his sight rests upon a deep and narrow glen, gloomy with woods, shelving down to its centre. What lies hid in that mysterious mass the eye may not visit ; but a sound comes down from afar, as of the rushing and din of waters. It is the voice of the Tweed, as it bursts from the melancholy hills, and comes rejoicing down the sunny vale, taking its free course through the

haugh, and glittering amongst sylvan bowers—swelling out at times fair and ample, and again contracted into gorges and sounding cataracts—lost for a space in its mazes behind a jutting brae, and reappearing in dashes of light through bolls of trees opposed to it in shadow.

Thus it holds its fitful course. The stranger might wander in the quiet vale, and, far below the blue summits, he might see the shaggy flock grouped upon some sunny knoll, or straggling among the scattered birch trees ; and, lower down on the haugh, his eye perchance might rest awhile on some cattle standing on a tongue of land by the margin of the river, with their dark and rich brown forms opposed to the brightness of the waters. All these outward pictures he might see and feel ; but he could see no farther : the lore had not spread its witchery over the scene—the legends slept in oblivion. The stark moss-trooper, and the clanking stride of the warrior, had not again started into life ; nor had the light blazed gloriously in the sepulchre of the wizard with the mighty book. The slogan swelled not anew upon the gale, resounding through the glens, and over the misty mountains ; nor had the minstrel's harp made music in the stately halls of Newark,\* or beside the lonely braes of Yarrow.

Since that time I have seen the cottage of Abbotsford with its rustic porch, lying peacefully on the haugh between the lone hills ; and have listened to the wild rush of the Tweed as it hurried beneath it. As time progressed, and as hopes arose, I have seen

\* The tower of Newark stands near Bowhill.



"Melrose Abbey and Landscape."

(From a drawing by E. Cooke.)



that cottage converted into a picturesque mansion, with every luxury and comfort attached to it, and have partaken of its hospitality : the unproductive hills I have viewed covered with thriving plantations, and the whole aspect of the country civilised, without losing its romantic character. But, amidst all these revolutions, I have never perceived any change in the mind of him who made them, “ the choice and master-spirit of the age.” There he dwelt in the hearts of the people, diffusing life and happiness around him : he made a home beside the border river, in a country and a nation that have derived benefit from his presence, and consequence from his genius. From his chambers he looked out upon the grey ruins of the abbey, and the sun which set in splendour beneath the Eildon Hills. Like that sun, his course has been run ; and though disastrous clouds came across him in his career, he went down in unfading glory.

These golden hours, alas ! have long passed ; but often have I visions of the sylvan valley, and its glittering waters, with dreams of social intercourse. Abbotsford, Mertoun, Chiefswood, Huntley Burn, Allerley—when shall I forget ye !

But, to our humble business. The swell of the river had been trifling, and it would be fit to fish on the morrow. The later in the day, said Walter the Bold, the better ; so I fidgetted away the early part of the morning, and hauled over my London tackle, which proved unseemly to the sight of the Scotchman. The flies, he said, were dressed like dancing dogs ; but my rod, he owned, was fine.

At last we started. We had about two or three miles to go to the upper cast, called the "Carry-wheel." As I neared it, and saw the sweep of the gallant river, I stepped out in eagerness till I came to the top of a steep covered with wood, gorse, and broom ; then I dashed down the rocks, and found myself on the channel, with the rush of a glorious salmon cast before me. Think of this, ye gudgeon fishers ! The rod was put together in haste—out came the London book ; and whilst I selected that misnomer a metropolitan salmon fly, a huge fish sprang out of the water before me, bright and lusty. What a challenge ! In my agitation the flies got entangled ;—confusion worse confounded beset me. The hooks stuck into my quivering fingers, and then a puff of wind scattered them abroad in various directions. To crown all, Walter kept me in a perspiration by making, as if he would throw for the fish, which, by anticipation, I considered as my property. At length I collected my senses, and my flies also ; and it is a wonder that I did so, as the said fish continued his gambols, and repeatedly claimed my attention.

Now then for it. The cast being narrow at the throat, I began with a short line, which I kept lengthening as it got wider ; for so it became me. I came now, step by step, to the spot where I expected to do for the fish. Excited as I was, I flung with spirit ; but the fly alighted not upon the wave ; far from it ; it attached itself most perfectly to a birch-tree in my rear, and crack went my top-varnished Higginbotham. Thus I was at once dis-

comfited almost in the arms of victory. Being totally driven from my propriety, I cannot be answerable for what I said or did : something very sublime it was, no doubt ; but let that pass. Certain it was that each particular hair of my head stood on end with horror. As I had spare tops to my rod, I soon set all to rights again. But throw, and throw as I would, the salmon would not " come and be killed " ; so I gave up the unreasonable brute at last as unattainable. Nor could the Scotchman make any hand of him afterwards. In fishermen's language, *I had set him down.*

The tail of the cast now grew broader, and it was necessary to wade ; so in I went, " accoutred as I was " ; that is to say, in light, flimsy walking shoes, without nails. I soon perceived that the wet stones were slippery and treacherous beyond endurance, and that my shoes had no adhesive qualities. My untutored feet took no hold, and I floundered about in the superlative degree, quite innocent of a due balance. At length, joyous to relate, I saw a break in the water, and the switch of a fish's tail : I struck, and found I had him fast. As for playing him, I did no such thing ; on the contrary, I honestly confess that he played me, and had all along the best of it too—for I could not keep my footing. I swayed like a pendulum, only more unevenly, till down I went from a treacherous stone, which joggled under my step, and tilted me in about middle deep. Being thus sufficiently humid, I beat a retreat as soon as I was able, and backed out on the channel : arrived there, I felt the beauty of my

new situation, and made certain of a capture. The monster was still strong, and sprung out of water, as if to show me what a prize I was about to obtain, and I acknowledged his value secretly. He next judged it prudent to give a sudden turn, a sort of ill-natured twist—an obstinate obliquity of motion that I shall never forget, or forgive : at once my muscles ceased to quiver—the line lost its strain and sprang aloft in thin air, and the rod was as straight as when it came from the maker's hands. Here was an exposition !—here was a horror ! To crown all, Walter stood by and took snuff most provokingly philosophical, and I thought I detected a half-suppressed smile on his visage. Raving as I was internally, I still conducted myself with outward decency, particularly when I found that the fish was lost owing to the bad temper of a London hook, which broke in the animal's jaw ; so that I, Harry Otter, was not to blame after all. I gave one solemn sigh for the death of old Kirby, whose hooks would not have broken in the mouth of a shark.

My Scotch friend now fitted me out with one of his own flies, but desired me not to throw any more in the Carry-wheel ; “for,” said he, “as sure as deid, the spirit is against ye : he hampered yer heucks, he broke yer goad and yer flee, and he pulled ye doon in the waters ; and ye never would hae been seen again in this life, gin I hadna cotched ye by the oxter.\* Thae that the Kelpie grips seldom rise again ; but nae ither spirit, ye ken, has power in the rinnin' water.” Whether I partook of this

\* The arm.

superstition matters not ; but I left the cast because it was unlucky, which is much the same thing.

I was now under the influence of some better spirit of the flood ; for I absolutely landed two gilse of six pounds each in a cast called "The Noirs." Wattie, seeing my rod bent, came up : he said but little ; but that little was the most unqualified abuse of my mismanagement. The fact is, I treated the gilse just as I would have treated a trout ; a very base mistake. I bagged them, however, notwithstanding—thanks to the excellence of the channel.

The next cast I came to was called "The Brig-end" ; and here I hooked a fine salmon : he was brave and strenuous, and so ponderous, that it seemed as if my hook had caught hold of a floating Norwegian pine, "fit for the mast of some high ammiral." After various eccentric courses, Master Fish made a sudden and desperate rush down the river ; out went my line with a whirring rattle, and cut one of my fingers sharply. I followed as best I might, prancing in the water like a war-horse, with the spray about my ears. Wattie hallooed out, and said I know not what ; but the tone of his voice was far from being complimentary. Nearly all my line of a hundred yards was now run out ; when the fish made a sudden turn, crossed to the opposite bank, and coasted up it amongst the rocks. Here again Wattie was perfectly wild.

"Gang back, I tell ye—haud up yer gaud—shorten yer line—keep aboon him, ye gomrell ! Ou, ye are

drownit as sure as deeth ! Pirn in, pirn in !—pirn out, pirn out ! Gang forrat, gang forrat !—gang ahint, gang ahint ! ” These contradictory exclamations I could have excused, as I believe they were warranted by the sudden turns of the fish ; but the fellow had absolutely the temerity to attempt to take my rod from me, whereat I lashed out behind, and gave him sundry kicks, as strong and hearty as could be managed with my degenerate shoes.

I did shorten my line a little, however ; but the water pressed against it so heavily that I could not extricate it as I wished. I had now receded to the shore, and gained, as I thought, the victory. Being resolved to be canny, I fixed my eyes intently upon the point where the line dipped into the water, under which I conceived the fish to be ; but to my surprise I caught a glimpse of my playfellow with the tail of my eye, springing out of the water, and towing my tackle after him about twenty yards above the spot where I conceived him to be. I was in a perfect tremor—ye gods, how I did shake ! But that did not last long, as the line all of a sudden vaulted into the air, and streamed abroad like the lithe pennon on a ship-mast, being, at a rude guess, about twenty yards minus of its pristine proportions. This was all magic to me at the time—magic of the most distressing sort ; but in after days I saw what my error was. I knew that it consisted in giving out too much line at first, which would have been unnecessary, had I stepped back at once on the channel, kept my rod aloft, and ran down the river-



DROWNED ALREADY AND ABOUT TO BE CUT

THE ELDON HILLS



side with my fish, still keeping above him. This, as has been seen, I did not do ; but kept deep in the water, where I could make but little way. With a shorter line, and good footing, I might have kept above my fish when he crossed over and made up the stream, and thus have held the line tight ; but as it was, it hung back in a huge sweep, that would have gone round the foundations of another Carthage—which sweep, coming in contact with a concealed rock or stone, gave the fish a dead pull, and he broke it incontinently : abiit, evasit, erupit. It was very distressing—very.

Now having your line in this untoward position is called *being drowned*, and the breaking of the tackle in the manner described *being cut*—soul-harrowing, suicidal miseries, that no one can properly describe except Mr. Richard Penn.\*

Here ended my fishing, and in summing up the events of the day I had not much to congratulate myself upon. I had been guilty of almost every error possible : I broke my hook and my rod ; I was moreover *cut* and *drowned*, technically speaking. I learned, however, four things : firstly, never to fish in a cast where the Kelpie has his stronghold ; secondly, to look occasionally behind me before my throw, where the banks are steep and near ; thirdly,

\* Richard Penn wrote *Maxims and Hints for an Angler and Miseries of Fishing*, first published in 1833. He was a member of the famous Houghton Club on the Test, and his very humorous little book was inscribed in the club journal. It has since been incorporated in the *Chronicles of the Houghton Club*, which appeared in 1908, edited by Sir Herbert Maxwell. The club started in 1822 and is very near its centenary now.—(ED.)

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to try the strength of my hook *before* I use it, not *after*; and, fourthly, to get into shoes of a proper consistency, and well studded with nails of Brobdingnag dimensions. Take warning, gentle readers, from these disasters, which are recounted for your benefit and instruction.

The day following I was more successful; for I shot twelve brace of partridges, and killed seven salmon in the evening. This I thought good sport, as partridges are scarce by the river side.

I rented various houses and large fisheries on Tweed side for about twenty years after this, remaining there not only during the summer months, but sometimes all the year round except close time; so that my experience reaches to all the methods of catching salmon during the legal time of the year. I shall now proceed to give as good an idea as I can, of the sort of thing to be expected by those who are inclined to follow the same amusement, together with such instructions as I would fain hope may increase their success. And, first, for wading.

Wading in the water is not only an agreeable thing in itself, but absolutely necessary in some rivers in the North that are destitute of boats; and that you may do this in the best possible style, procure half a dozen pair of shoes, with large knob-nails at some distance asunder: if they are too close, they will bring your foot to an even surface, and it will glide off a stone or rock, which in deep water may be inconvenient. Cut some holes in the upper-leathers of your shoes, to give the water a free passage out of them when you are on dry land; not because the

fluid is annoying, for we should wrong you to say so, but to prevent the pumping noise you would otherwise make at every step. If you are not much of a triton, you may use fishermen's boots, and keep yourself dry : it is all a matter of taste. When you are wading through the rapids, step on quickly and boldly, and do not gaze down on the stream after the fashion of Narcissus ; for running waves will not reflect your beauty, but only make your head giddy. If you stop for a moment, place your legs abreast of each other : should you fancy a straddle, with one of them in advance, the action of the water will operate upon both, trip you up, and carry you out to sea. Observe, I am talking of a heavy stream. The body of a man, who probably lost his life in this manner, was found low down the river when I was fishing. I asked John Haliburton, who was then my fisherman, where it came from. "I suppose," said he, "it travelled all the way from Peebles."\*

Avoid standing upon rocking stones, for obvious reasons ; and never go into the water deeper than the fifth button of your waistcoat : even this does not always agree with tender constitutions in frosty weather. As you are likely not to take a just estimate of the cold in the excitement of the sport, should you be of a delicate temperament, and be wading in the month of February, when it may chance to freeze very hard, pull down your stockings, and examine your legs. Should they be black, or even purple, it might, perhaps, be as well to get on dry land ; but if they are only rubicund, you may

\* Peebles was about twenty-five miles from the spot in question.

## 118 DAYS AND NIGHTS OF SALMON FISHING

continue to enjoy the water, if it so pleases you. If you go in far enough to throw over the cast, that is sufficient ; for, remember, it is not good to have a very long line when a short one will answer your purpose. You will not strike your fish so soon, and a sudden run of his might place you in an awkward predicament when your progress is impeded by wading.

It is really refreshing, and does one's heart good, to see how some that are green in the sport will, in the language of stag hunting, "take to soil." I heard of a very fat man from the precincts of Cheap-side, who was encountered in the river Shiel, in Inverness-shire, by two gentlemen—merrier ones than whom "I never passed an hour's talk withal." The corpulent man looked at the water for some time like a child that is going into a cold bath, and does not half like it ; he then broke forth in the following guise :—

"I am convinced, gentlemen, that your waders catch most fish. I say, gentlemen, that those who wade are the most successful." His opinion being greatly encouraged, he put forth one foot in the pool ; and not finding the sensation very alarming, for the weather was warm, he walked soberly forward, saying at every step, "Ay, ay,—your waders catch the most fish." Now the rock shelving down near the bank, in progressing he was soon up to his hips—

"Tendebatque manus ripæ ulterioris amore" ;

but he could not reach the desired spot even then.

In this dilemma he looked wistfully at the shore for advice. "How deep should I go?" said the enterprising man. One said to the fifth button of your waistcoat, and the other to your shirt-collar. He preferred the fifth button; and soon treading on a faithless stone, fairly toppled head foremost into the pool. His hand relaxed its grasp, and away went the fishing rod down the stream. He himself was soon placed out of danger by the gentlemen—an attention that, considering all things, he was fairly entitled to; but his rod lay across the river, the butt end opposed in its passage by one rock in the middle of it, and the top by another; so the weight of the stream bore upon the centre, and snapped it in twain. The corpulent gentleman took all with the greatest good humour; and as the water streamed from him at all points, as it were from a river god, and as he applied a brandy flask to his mouth, he said only at the intervals between his potations, "I am not quite so sure that your waders catch the most fish; gentlemen, I say, I have my doubts of it."

To the credit of my friends be it spoken, they waded and swam after the two divisions of his rod, which they spliced together for him, and set him going again; not in the faithless water, but on the trusty shore, which he now seemed to prefer.

I cannot in conscience recommend a course of wading to a sedentary man as a new experiment, or even as an old custom revived after a lapse of years; and this for the following reason.

General Gowdie was born on the banks of the

Leader-water, which falls into the Tweed about a mile and a half below Melrose, near Fly Bridge. In his youth he was an ardent and expert salmon fisher ; in after life he went out to India, and served honourably there for forty years. At length, in the decline of life, he was seized with the Swiss passion—an unconquerable yearning to revisit the land of his sires. Night after night he heard in his dreams the murmuring lapse of the Leader as it glided down his native valley ; again he reposed in the sunny dell, and thought of “*auld lang syne*” ; then, when the cheerless morn broke forth, and he found himself on a vast continent, far away from the land of his father’s he felt as one cast out of Paradise. Gone were the visions of his early scenes and companions ; lost, long lost, but too well remembered. How distant, alas ! from the bonny copses of Carroll-side !—how far from the silver waters of the Tweed !

After honourable service he set sail for the shores of Scotland, determined to pass the remainder of his days in comparative privacy and tranquillity. I met him soon after his arrival, and gave him some salmon fishing. It was delightful to see how he enjoyed himself : he waded as deep as any of us. And I well remember showing him a favourite seat for a salmon near the point of a cairn : he cast his fly at once in the exact spot to an inch, and threw several times with the same adroitness ; not because he expected to raise a salmon—for he well knew that if a fish did not come at the first dexterous throw, it was useless to cast a second time for him in the same place—but because he felt great satis-

faction at his renewed dexterity, and he was pleased that any one should witness it.\*

Poor fellow ! his happiness did not last long. The habit of wading at his advanced time of life brought on internal disease, which soon ended fatally ; and he only repassed the seas to lay his bones in the father-land.

\* It is difficult to see quite what Scrope means here. Salmon seldom move about much when they are resting, and "the same place" is the necessary spot to reach with a second cast. Moreover, on occasion they can be "worried" into taking. Very occasionally one has a chance of watching them from some convenient post of observation while another angler is casting, and the "worrying" can be watched. It is very instructive.—(ED.)

## CHAPTER VI

" I tell you more : there was a fish taken,  
A monstrous fish, with a sword by 's side,—a long sword ;  
A pike in 's neck, and a gun in 's nose,—a huge gun ;  
And letters of mart in 's mouth from the Duke of Florence.

*Cleanthes.* This is a monstrous lie.

*Tony.* I do confess it ;

Do you think I'd tell you truths ? "

*Fletcher's Wife for a Month.*

HAVING set forth the advantages, as well as the risk of wading, in a fair, and I hope a rational light, I will proceed to advise on other matters.

*In primis*, your rod should be proportioned to the size of the river you fish in ; eighteen or twenty feet long. The longer the rod, the greater command you will have over your fish ; for being enabled to keep the line more perpendicular, you can lead him with more ease and security amongst rocks and eddies ; whereas with a short rod you cannot keep enough of your line clear of the water to prevent danger in such places.\* It is true that the late Lord Somerville, who was an excellent fisherman, used a one-handed trout rod for salmon.

\* The evolution of the split cane rod has modified practice a good deal ; 16 feet to 18 feet would now be the usual variation of choice. Split cane rods are so powerful that even a single-handed rod of 11 feet will kill a salmon pretty quickly, and not a few men use such a rod now. The chief advantage of a long rod is in " hanging " the fly over the fish.—(ED.)

He did not, however, do so from choice, but from necessity ; for having once put out his shoulder, he could not manage to throw with a rod of the usual size. He once put this little rod into my hands when we were fishing together in his water ; but, for want of practice, I could make little or nothing of it, but I was astonished to see what a long line he himself could throw with it. It must be noted, however, that he fished from a boat in the upper and narrower part of the Tweed, where the channel is excellent, and where there are few bad rocks ; in a large river, abounding in all those natural obstructions which its waters fight with, no human ingenuity could have saved him from being often cut with such Lilliputian tackle.

Your line should be about a hundred or a hundred and twenty or thirty yards, according to the breadth of the river you fish in ; tapering, of course, towards the end. Your gut single, clear, and round. Of such you may make a casting line sufficiently strong for any salmon you will ever encounter in these degenerate days.

The colour of your casting line should depend upon the state of the river. Take some thought, therefore, to adapt it accordingly : in doing so, you may fancy that you and the fish have changed places. Whilst you are on dry land your object of comparison is the dark bed of the river, which misleads you of course ; whereas the objects of comparison to the fish, who lies below, are the colour of the sky and the medium of water. If the

water then be moss-stained, your gut may be very faintly tinged of the same colour—very faintly indeed, as all dyes are overdone ; but if the river be clear, do not on any account stain your casting line at all. The sky may vary in colour every minute : an attempt to match it, therefore, is out of the question. You may easily satisfy yourself of the superiority of white over dyed gut, in ordinary cases, by remarking the appearance of both when placed in a tumbler of pure water.

Whatever you do, have nothing to say to multiplying reels : they are apt to betray you in the hour of trial.

My first discovery of their insufficiency for heavy fish created some embarrassment at the time. I had a pet multiplier, which ran beautifully, and which I had long used for trout fishing. As it was sufficiently large to contain a salmon line, I employed it for that purpose also, till it began to get ricketty with the more heavy work. One day, the water being fallen in, and the morning also being sunny, so as to exclude the expectation of killing a salmon, I put some trout tackle at the end of my line, which was on the said reel, and began trouting in Bolside-water. In the course of the day a cloud passed before the sun ; and at the same time, as is usually the case, a slight breeze arose and ruffled the surface of the water. I hastened to change my tackle, and substituted a small salmon fly in place of the trout ones : small, because, as I have said, the water was quite fallen in. Though many years have passed over my head since that

time, I remember this fly well. His wings were of the clear brown feather from the bittern ; his body of black wool, with a hackle of the same colour ; and his tail of a very pronounced yellow, being made of the feather of a golden pheasant ; red he was in the head, and altogether of a very commendable and alluring aspect. The curl on the water still continuing, I whisked him off gaily. At the very second throw, the pool being somewhat dead, I saw the water heave up, advancing in a wave towards me. I waited patiently for the break, which was a slight one, but pleasant and beauteous to behold. This I knew to be the act of the *Salmo Salar* ; and as my line was short, I was, as I before recommended to others, in no hurry to strike ; but fix him I did in due season. He no sooner felt the hook than he began to rebel ; and executed some very heavy runs, which so disconcerted the machinery of my multiplier as almost to dislocate the wheels. The line gave out with starts and hitches, so that I was obliged to assist it with my hands. To wind up it resolutely refused ; so that I was compelled to gather in the line in large festoons when it was necessary to shorten it, and again to give these out as best I could when the fish made a run. Add to this embarrassment that the ground was distressing, there being alder bushes in my rear, which made it impossible for me to retreat and advance by land, by which means I could have humoured the fancies of the fish, so as to obviate in some degree the necessity of giving out and shortening the line. So I had no power whatever

over the salmon, which was evidently a very large one.

In the course of an hour I made no impression upon him at all, my whole aim being to avoid a break. I never engaged with a more subtle animal. Sometimes he would make the tour of all the neighbouring stones, where he endeavoured, no doubt, to rub the hook out of his mouth ; then he would take a long rest, as if he cared nothing about it. From the cause I have mentioned my tackle was always in disorder, which kept me in great apprehension. Thus the matter went on for nearly two hours more, still with a very dubious result. At length a stone being thrown in by my attendant at a spot where I could follow along the bank, he put his head down the river peremptorily, and went off like a rocket. I ran with him down the channel, as he skimmed through the shallows and darted through the rough gorges, in evident danger, as I was, of losing him every moment. At length he fairly exhausted himself, and I was able to urge him to a sand bank, and lay him on his broadside.

The sand bank, however, had a few inches of water running over it, but not sufficient to cover the fish. My attendant, Philip Garrat, had the tact to place himself between the deep water and the fish. Then came the struggle. A Wiltshire novice, like the said Philip, could not hold a live salmon with his hands, so he tried to kick him forward on the dry channel. All this time I hallooed stoutly to him to take care of the line. My anxiety was extreme ; for the fish was sometimes able to place

himself in a swimming posture, and wriggle away near the deep water. In fact, had there been but one inch of water more over the sand bank, he would have had it all his own way. Philip, aware of the danger, set at him with redoubled activity, kicking his fastest and best. But the event being still doubtful, he knelt down and grappled with him ; and finding him still slippery and elusive, he cast himself bodily upon him, and fixed him with his weight at once : “ *Toto certatum est corpore regni.* ” So thought he of Macedonian appellation ; but he did not express himself in such terms, being a man of no clerk-like capacity : whatever he might have thought, he only said, looking up with a grin of delight and with a Wiltshire accent, “ I got un—be hanged if I ha’nt.”

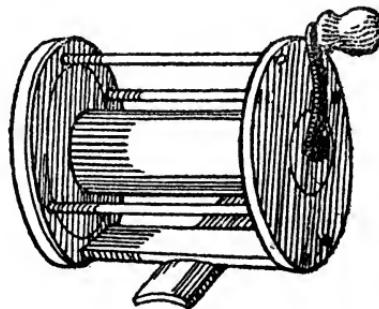
A cold bath for a few minutes more or less is of no consequence ; so I made him remain a space, like *Ætna* pressing upon the shoulders of Enceladus, till I came up and gripped the huge salmon by the tail, and walked to dry land with him, triumphant.

I was nearly three hours in killing this fish, all owing to the derangement of a multiplying reel ; and as this contrivance, though useful enough in our trout rivers, will by no means answer with very large fish, I have mentioned the above occurrence in detail as a warning to others.

After this time I caused to be made some large single reels, nicely constructed, so as to give the line out evenly, and not run too slackly ; and I directed that the cylinders should be of a very ample circum-

ference, which gave me the same advantage that a multiplying reel has with the usual cylinder.\*

William Purdie at that time rented the Bolside-water, which runs by Abbotsford, and in which I caught this fish. His son, then a little boy, happened to pass by when I landed him, and I sent him home to his father with the salmon ; but it was with extreme difficulty that the little fellow got up the brae, as his load, which was hung over his shoulders,



frequently made him stagger back down the rocks which he had from time to time ascended. That little boy came into my service as fisherman some seasons afterwards, and has lived with me now about eighteen years. He is a capital fly-maker and boatman, and a most valuable servant. Some of his exploits appear in these pages, he being the

\* Scrope's reel was perhaps the beginning of the modern style of reel in which the cylinder is of considerable circumference, but that circumference is now achieved in salmon reels by the use of "backing," that is to say, 60 yards to 100 yards of undressed line which packs the drum before the dressed line is wound on. But multiplying reels are by no means extinct. For big game fishing at sea they are very necessary, and beautiful pieces of mechanism some of them are.—(Ed.)

identical Charlie Purdie so repeatedly mentioned in them.

A great deal of mystery is made on every river as to the flies you should fish with. Thus when a novice arrives at his fishing station, he sends for the oracle of the river ; pulls out his book, crammed as closely as a pot of pemmican, and displays before him the various devices of an Eaton, an Ustonson, or a Chevalier. Nothing dazzled, Donald much admires what one may be, and what the other ; this he rejects as useless, that he laughs to scorn. At length, after having grinned extensively at those tinselled animals called *kill devils*, he examines some twenty dozen of your best flies ; and, pulling out one from the number, tells you that might serve well enough if it had different wings, a different body, and a yellow tail. Now all this is overdone ; but I would advise you to acquiesce in the predictions of the said oracle, simply to save the trouble of argument. One thing you may be sure of ; namely, that you may as well attempt to make the Tweed run back to its source as to shake his opinions.

Now, as there is no month in the year when salmon flies are made by nature, so no distinction of species need be observed. My rule has been to adapt my fly, both as to colour and size, to the state of the water : a large fly with sober colours for deep and clear water, and a smaller one, equally unassuming, where it is shallower ; in the throat of the cast, and as long as it continues rough, a large fly also ; at the tail of it, where the water

runs more quietly and evenly, a smaller one serves the purpose best. Thus you should change your fly in every stream once or twice. A large and rather gaudy fly is preferable when the river is full and discoloured, that the salmon, which lie at great depths, may see it; but I never had any great success with very gaudy flies, either in the Tweed or elsewhere, in clear and low waters. Salmon will rise at them, it is true; but those that have been long in the water will not take them freely when the river is in the state I have spoken of, though they excite their curiosity, and serve them for playthings. I believe it is the fashion now to think otherwise; so that in these days a golden pheasant's feathers are in as high estimation in Scotland as they always have been in Ireland.

In tying your flies, you may have some regard to the harmonic colours, as less startling and more natural. You may laugh, if you please, but I would fain think there is something in this. If you know them not, consult Sir David Brewster's table of spectral colours in his distinguished *Philosophical Magazine*.

I have said that there is no animal in nature resembling our salmon flies; but I once caught a fish who was certainly persuaded that he was attacking an animal that he had previously seen flying. This event happened when I was a novice. Walter Ronaldson was attending me, and we were walking by the side of the *Elm-wheel* in the Pavilion-water. Walter was some way in advance, when I saw a white butterfly fluttering up and down over



1



2



3



4

1. WILKINSON  
3. JOCK SCOTT

2. BLACK RANGER  
4. GREENWELL



the water, and a salmon make a fruitless dart at it. It chanced that I had made some large salmon flies with white wings, in imitation of a pattern that was formerly the fashion for trout fishing, and was called, I know not why, *the coachman*. One of these I immediately looped to my line : the fish, no doubt taking it for the butterfly that he saw flitting above him, came at it at once, and I took him. When he was landed, Walter's astonishment was great when he saw the fly, and he made a dozen imitations of it before he laid his head on the pillow. I should not think that under other circumstances such a fly would be alluring.\*

When a man toils a long time without success, he is apt to attribute his failure to the using an improper fly ; so he changes his book through, till at last, perhaps, he catches fish. The fly, with which he achieves this, is naturally enough a favourite ever afterwards, and probably without reason : the cause of success might be in the change of air and temperature of the water ; and the same thing would probably have occurred if he had persevered with the same fly with which he began. When the night has been frosty, salmon will not stir till the water has received the genial warmth of the day ; and there are a thousand hidden causes of obstruction which we, who are not fish, know nothing about.

As an instance, I once fished over a short stream

\* I have heard that the Coachman was named after its inventor, an angler of old days who used to fish in the Middlesex Colne. It is a famous trout fly, still used everywhere.—(ED.)

above "The Webbs," in Mertoun-water, without having an offer ; being convinced there were fish in it, I went over it a second time with *the same fly* immediately afterwards, and caught two salmon and two gilse. Now if I had changed my fly, as is usual, the success would naturally have been attributed to such change. But, observe, I do not mean to assert that all flies are equally successful, for there must obviously be a preference, however slight ; but I mean merely to say that a failure oftener occurs from atmospheric variations than from the colour of the fly. Yet an occasional change is always advisable, particularly if you have had any offers ; since the fish in so rising, having, perhaps, discovered the deception, will not be solicitous to renew their acquaintance with a detected scamp. After all, the great thing is to give the appearance and motion of a living animal.\*

Once, when I was adjusting my tackle on Tweed side, I was accosted by a native fisherman in these words—"Ye need na fash yersel the day wi' yer lang wand, for I wud na gie a pinch o' snuff for a' that ye'll get ; there are too many *pouthered lawyrs* aboot." Powdered lawyers ! I gazed around me, and did not see a single gentleman of the long robe. What on earth could the man mean ? and what had a powdered lawyer to do with my sport ? Upon explanation, I found out that he alluded to the numerous puffy white clouds above. Whether the

\* The attractiveness of various flies is still a mystery, but we have a little more to go upon now than Scrope had, thanks to the experiments of Dr. Francis Ward. Cf. Appendix.—(Ed.)

likeness of these to lawyers' wigs was appropriate or not, I leave to those who are learned in similes to determine ; but he certainly was right in his main position.

If your fish misses the fly in making his offer, wait awhile before you throw a second time ; and if he rises at all, he will come more eagerly for this delay. When he returns to his seat, after the unsuccessful sortie, he will say *mentally* (for thus do fishes and novelists discourse), " What a donkey I was to be so awkward ! By St. Antonio, if he comes again, I'll smash him ! " But if you keep lashing away at him immediately, as I have seen many fishermen do—ay, and practised hands too—he will probably treat you with contempt, and will have no intercourse with your gay deluders for the rest of the day. It is some time, perhaps, since he has taken up his seat in the water, without ever having seen an animal like that which you are so obliging as to tender him : all of a sudden come a swarm of locusts, as it were, one after another over his *neb*, which astonish and alarm him exceedingly. Thus it is apparent, my most excellent, but too persevering friend, that you do not do justice to his sagacity, or instinct, or whatever you please to term it, if you set to work in such an intrusive manner.

As in all other rivers, so there are various flies made use of in the Tweed ; but the variety consists more, I think, in size than in colour. A large fly, as I have said, for the heavy and deep waters, and a smaller one for the upper part of the river. That is the general system. More minute particulars

I have already given. Here are six flies, which I have always found the most successful: I do not mean to say that they are the best that can be used, but only that they are such as I have most confidence in from experience. They were tied by my fisherman Charles Purdie, and in such a manner as to make them cut their way steadily through the water. They are known by different names; so that when I say to my fisherman give me this, or give me that, mentioning the patronymic, forth it comes, without the trouble of searching over the book myself.

Two of these flies are of the masculine gender, three of the feminine, and one of the neuter. The masculine are *Michael Scott* and *Kinmont Willie*; the feminine, the *Lady of Mertoun* or the *Flower of Yarrow*, *Meg with the Muckle Mouth* in her usual dress, and *Meg* in her bravery—or, *Scotticè, braws*. The fly of the neuter gender has been called *Toppy* from time immemorial.

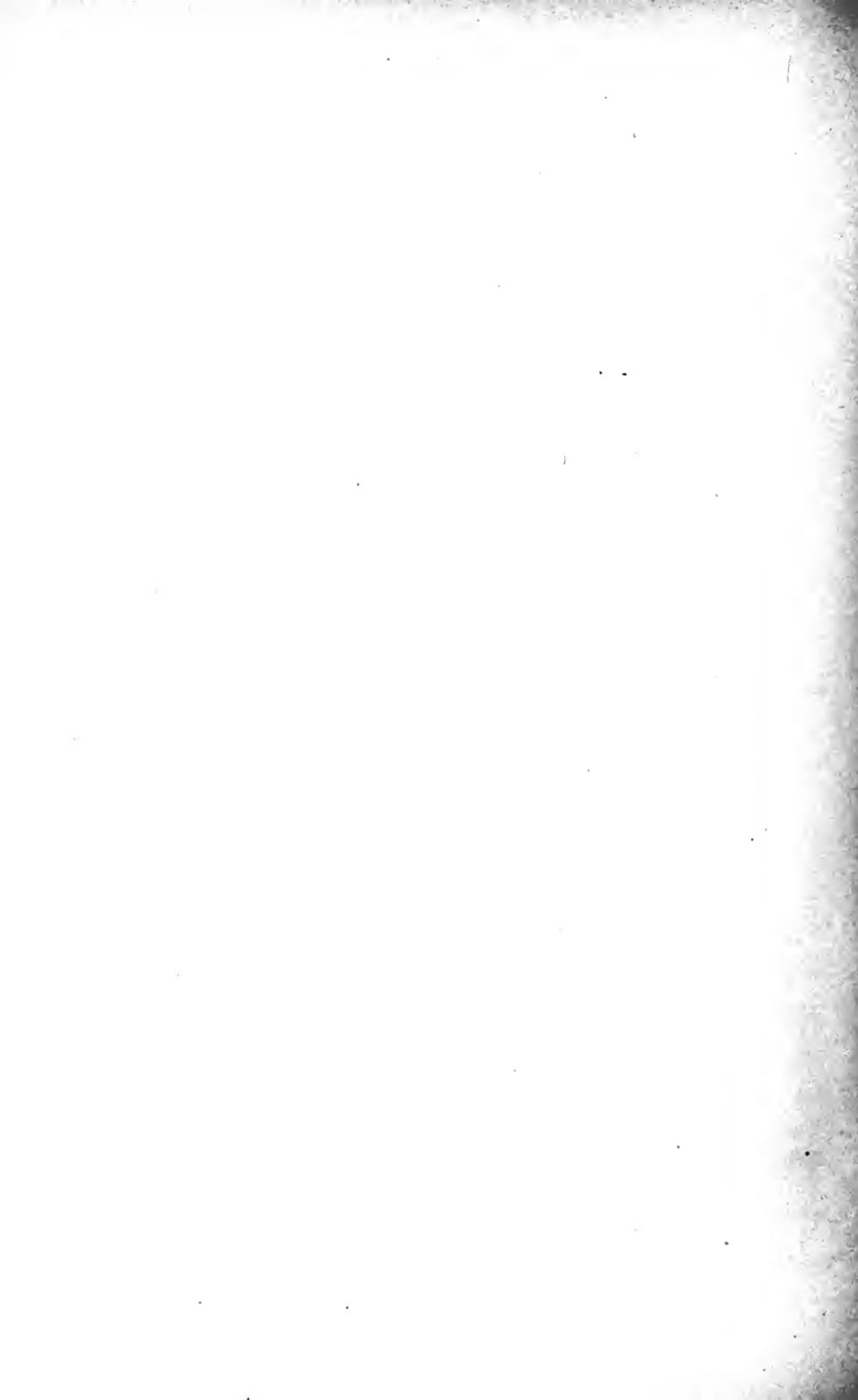
### No. I.

#### *Kinmont Willie.*

Wings . . . . .	Mottled feather from under the wing of a male teal.
Head . . . . .	Yellow wool.
Body : : : . .	Fur of the hare's ear.
End of body : . .	Red wool.
Tail . . . . .	Yellow wool.
Round the body : . .	Black-cock's hackle.

I found this fly very successful in the Annan when I lived at Kinmont, from which place it derives its name,





## No. 2.

*The Lady of Mertoun.*

Wings . . . . .	Mottled feather from under the wings of the male teal.
Head . . . . .	Crimson wool.
Body . . . . .	Water-rat's fur.
End of body . . . . .	Crimson wool.
Tail . . . . .	Yellow wool.
Round the body . . . . .	Black-cock's hackle.
End of body . . . . .	A little red hackle.

## No. 3.

*Toppy.*

Wings . . . . .	Black feather from a turkey's tail tipped with white.
Head . . . . .	Crimson wool.
Body . . . . .	Black bullock's hair.
End of body . . . . .	Crimson wool.
Tail . . . . .	Yellow wool.
Body . . . . .	Black-cock's hackle
End of body . . . . .	Small piece of red-cock's hackle.

## No. 4.

I will now describe *Michael Scott*, a most killing wizard.

—“Chi veramente  
Delle magiche frodi seppe il gioco.”

Wings . . . . .	Mottled feather from the back of a drake.
Head . . . . .	Yellow wool, with a little hare's fur next to it.
Body . . . . .	Black wool.
End of the body . . . . .	Fur from the hare's ear ; next to the hare's ear crimson wool.
Tail . . . . .	Yellow wool.
Round the body . . . . .	Black-cock's hackle.
End of the body . . . . .	Red-cock's hackle.
Round the body . . . . .	Gold twist, spirally.

## No. 5.

*Meg with the Muckle Mouth.*

Wings . . . . .	From the tail of a brown turkey.
Head . . . . .	Crimson wool.
Body . . . . .	Yellow silk.
End of body . . . . .	Crimson wool.
Tail . . . . .	Yellow or orange wool.
Round the tail . . . . .	Red-cock's hackle.
Round the body . . . . .	Gold twist ; over it hackle mixed with colour, as above.

## No. 6.

*Meg in her Braws.*

Wings . . . . .	Light brown, from the wing of a bittern.
Head . . . . .	Yellow wool.
Next the head . . . . .	Mottled blue feather from a jay's wing.
Body . . . . .	Brown wool mixed with bullock's hair.
Towards the end of body . . . . .	Green wool ; next to that crimson wool.
Tail . . . . .	Yellow wool.
Round the body . . . . .	Gold twist ; over that cock's hackle, black at the roots and red at the points.

Concerning these flies I will note one thing, which is, that if you rise a fish with the *Lady of Mertoun*, and he does not touch her, give him a rest, and come over him with the *Toppy*, and you have him to a certainty, and *vice versa*. This I hold to be an invaluable secret, and is the only change that during my long practice I have found eminently successful.

Having now named all things necessary for the sport, I must now advise all fishermen, Cocknies in particular, to provide themselves with plenty of

spare tackle before they go felicity hunting ; for in the wilds of Scotland it is not easy to replace any loss that inexperience and ill fortune may occasion.

A friend of mine told me a circumstance, by which it appeared that a very worthy person was considerably embarrassed for want of this due precaution. This said friend had been fishing in the river Shiel in Inverness-shire, and was seated on a bank with a large salmon before him that he had just caught. He was eyeing the fish with complacency, and smoking a cigar in all the enjoyment of success. Whilst in this tranquil mood, a man suddenly vaulted over the wall of the Shiel Bridge :

“ And when he had not the least suspicion,  
Was with him like an apparition.”

This man he described to me as fresh in his attire. Thin and new were his shoes—new also was his jacket, new his waistcoat, and novel his pantaloons ; but newest of all was his top-varnished salmon rod, turned out by Eaton : but he was shabbily thatched, his hat being worse than common. His flies, to all appearance, were made by the Turks—men forbidden by their religion to imitate any of the works of the Creation. As for the man himself, no one could look at him without being put in mind of Mantellini.

“ Demnition fine pool, sir.”

“ Very fine indeed, sir ; but you will never catch a fish where you are casting at present, because fish do not lie in that bare water.”

Upon this our man faced round, put his forefinger to his nose, and, with an expression of

sagacity and wisdom that I should in vain attempt to describe, said,

“ Do you see any thing green in my eyes, sir ? ”

It was evident such a person was not born to be instructed, but simply to be admired. My friend, therefore, left his rod upon the bank, and walked after him, cigar in mouth, to get some insight into his tactics. Arrived at a better part of the pool, he hooked a fish ; and here it was curious to see the difference of opinion between a Cockney and one who had been bred to the sport. The Cockney was of a yielding disposition, and judged it advisable to let the fish have his own way ; the result of which was, that he ran out an exorbitant length of line, and was going to a sort of whirlpool amongst the rocks.

“ Hold him in, hold him in ; if he gets to that eddy, you are done.”

“ Fine fish, sir, fine fish ; fast hooked, sir. Do you see any thing green in my eyes ? I have an opinion of my own, sir.”

“ So has the fish. And now it is all over with you ; for if you had nothing but a dried herring at the end of your line, you would never get it out of that mess. I hope you have another casting line, because you will never see that again.”

“ Fine fish, sir ; fine rod, sir ; fine line, sir ; fast hooked, sir—fast hooked. Do you see any thing green——”

He was stopped short in the sentence by an alarming rush of the salmon, who shot forward up the stream, and took out the whole of the line of the

consenting party to the tune of 120 yards. Now it is a wholesome rule to make fast the end of the line, by running it through a hole in the cylinder of the reel, and tying some knots at the extremity to secure it ; and as this rule is wholesome, so it has been practised time immemorial by all sagacious persons, and even by some who are not very sagacious. But there are exceptions to all rules, and our man had neglected this caution ; consequently, the line, being all run out, vanished at once through the rings of the rod, and streamed fair and ample below the surface of the water. The mermaid may, but that line shall no terrestrial ever see again.

" Demnition hard that, sir. What an extraordinary incident ! Fish well managed, dexterously, artistically. Very odd indeed, sir : beautifully played ;—fine rod, fine hand. Demnition hard, I must say. Now how far must I go to get a line ? "

" If you mean to get the same, probably to the middle of the Irish Channel, or the mouth of the Shannon ; but if you seek a new one, which I think would be the most prudent course, walk up to the road, and you will see a mile-stone, which says, ' To Inverness 120 miles '—exactly a mile for every yard of line you have lost, and I am sorry for it."

Casting the fly is a knack, and cannot well be taught but by experience : the spring of the rod should do the chief work, and not the labour of your arm. To effect this, you should lay the stress as near the hand as possible, and make the wood undulate from that point ; which is done by keeping

your elbow in advance, and doing something with your wrist, which, as Mr. Penn says, is not very easy to explain. Thus the exertion should be chiefly from the elbow and wrist, and not from the shoulders. You should throw clear beyond the spot where the salmon lie, so that they may not see the fly light upon the water ; then you should bring the said fly round the stream, describing the segment of a circle taking one step in advance at every throw. In this manner the fish see your fly only, and not the line. It is customary to give short jerks with the fly as you bring it round, something in the manner of minnow fishing, but in a more gentle and easy way ; and I think this manner is the most seducing you can adopt : it sets the wings in a state of alternate expansion and contraction that is extremely captivating.

Salmon will often take your fly on one side of the river when they will not touch it on the other.\* In high water, the channel side, as a general rule, is the best, and at the cheek of the current ; and you should not be in a hurry to pull your fly into the more bare and still parts of the channel, where the fish will come more cautiously and lazily. In low water it is best to throw over the channel from the rocky side, drawing at first rather quickly, that your fish may take your fly in the current, which is material. In very low water, indeed, when the fish may be said to give over rising, you may try your luck in

\* I think Dr. Francis Ward's experiments have helped to explain this. It is in many cases evidently a question of the angle of light. Cf. Appendix.—(ED.)

the rapids by hanging your fly on them ; indeed, you should always let your fly dwell on this sort of water, or the fish will either lose sight of it, or not choose to follow where you may wish him. All these things are not easily explained in writing, nor, I believe, in conversation, as will appear from the following example.

A friend of mine went with two companions to fish in the river Mora, on the coast of Inverness-shire. One of these two comrades was a young Oxonian, and a novice ; the other was an experienced fisherman. They were all three in one of those Highland shielings, redolent of peat smoke and whiskey, which is absolute luxury to a thoroughbred sportsman, as being in keeping and character with the nature of his pursuit. The Oxonian was an excellent person, but, as I have hinted, knew nothing upon earth about salmon fishing ; so Mr. E. C., who was an adept in the said art, set about instructing him by word of mouth. The third person of the party happened not to coincide with the excellence of the simple instructions he was giving, and laid it down as an axiom, that it was impossible to catch a fish, unless your fly was at right angles to your rod. This seemed not at all to be comprehended ; and after a little arguing, the said oracle, by way of illustration, took a stick, tied his handkerchief to it, and gave a few throws on the table. "Now," said he, "these are very bad throws, and would never catch a fish." This assertion was applauded, and immediately carried by acclamation. "To make a good cast, and keep your fly in the rectangular

position," continued the maestro, "you must furl your line thus." So saying, he gave the handkerchief a knowing whisk, which extinguished both the candles. Thus he argued with all his might, feeding the young Oxonian with scientific maxims, who promised that he would furl his line, and fish mathematically.

The next morning no one could start with a fairer prospect of sport than the said novice. He was accompanied by *Allan Beg*, or Little Allan, because he was told it was quite impossible for him to catch a salmon without his assistance ; and he was taught how to kill his fish "par raison démonstrative." But throw as he would, furl as he might, he could by no means manage to keep his fly always at right angles to his rod, although he was a most excellent mathematician. At length, after having lost seven favourite flies, and two casting lines, he broke out in unqualified abuse of the system ; which so enraged his "gentle brother of the angle," that high words arose, and they were on the point of committing the *duello* on those very sands where it is said Prince Charles drew up his forces. My friend was asked to act as impartial second to both parties, which he consented to, on condition only that they should stand and fire so that the balls might cross at right angles to each other. But "Etes-vous fou," said he to the Oxonian ; "de l'aller quereller, lui qui entend les angles, et qui sait tuer un saumon par raison démonstrative ?" At this good humour returned, and each party fished the rest of the day according to the angles that best suited his fancy, without let or argument.

Now in *holding* your fly on a rough stream you must advance your arms, and bring your rod straight across the river, consequently your line hanging straight down the stream may form a right angle at the point of your rod, and so you should work it in this instance ; but in most other cases I prefer the obtuse angle. As to the argument, “*Ils avoient raison tous deux.*”

In hooking a rising fish, it is best to strike a little sideways, that the hook may fasten in the fleshy part of the mouth ; whereas, if you pull straight up, you are apt to encounter the upper or bony part ; or if the fish has not closed his jaws, and fairly turned off, you may pull the fly away from him too soon, to the disappointment of both parties. As a proof of this, if it does not appear sufficiently obvious, I appeal to any one, who has tried it, to say whether or not it is an easy matter to hook a rising fish, the experimentalist being stationed on a high bridge.

Sometimes, however, when a salmon is clean run, and in high glee, you can scarcely miss him, strike which way you will.

I remember fishing at the Troughs, under the auspices of Rob Kerse, early in the spring, before a clean fish had been caught there that season. I stood over one of those gorges where an immense volume of water, pent up in a narrow passage, rolls furiously between its rocky barriers. Here I fixed myself for a few casts—the rocks being of such a nature that I could not go lower down the river either in a boat or by wading. This cast is called the Clippers, and is in Mackerston-water.

Here, with a line not given out above my rod's length, I hooked a clean salmon that rose close under me. I struck him as he was at the surface of the water : as soon as he felt the hook, he endeavoured to dig downwards. I gave him the butt of my rod, and he bent the whole of it in a way that I never saw before, making it in shape, with a slight exaggeration, nearly two-thirds of a circle. "Gie him line, gie him line," roared out Kerse and Charlie Purdie—"od but he'll break ye, mon." Now I knew that if he went down the Clippers amongst the rocks, I should be cut in a moment to a dead certainty ; for, as I noted before, I could not follow. So I was determined not to yield at all events, and I held him firm at the surface of the water. In this position he had not half his natural power, and in less than a minute Charlie cleiked him, and brought him out before he could dig down. Thus he was taken by surprise. He proved to be a clean salmon of ten pounds, and the first that had been caught that season. Now this could not have been done, had not the line been short and the fish almost immediately under me. I remember Kerse (who had before been pressing the necessity of using *double* or *triple* gut in such dangerous water) saying, "Ay, that was canny enough ; but if you had not been advised by me, it could not have been done at ony gait." I showed him my casting line, however, which, excepting the first length next the line, was of strong single gut. But he was certainly right in his assertion as to the necessity of very strong tackle in such a singular cast, especially as the river was very full, and

the torrent so impetuous that nice tackle was by no means requisite.

In a low clear water you must be somewhat dilatory in striking : you often see the heave of the water and a break before the fish has actually seized your fly. Give him time to turn his head in his way back to his seat, to which a salmon always returns after rising at the fly. Tom Purdie gave me an account of a fish that had perplexed him greatly by his non-observance of this rule, as nearly as possible in the following words. He might have used fewer certainly, but Tom was not laconic.

"I had," said he, "risen a sawmon three successive days at the throat of Caddon-water fut, and on the fourth day I was determined to bring him to book ; and when he rose as usual, I went up to Caddon Wa's, namely, the pool opposite the ruins of Caddon Lee, where there had been a terrace garden facing the south ; and on returning I tried my old friend, when he rose again without touching the heuck : but I got a glimpse o' him, and saw he was a sawmon o' the biggest sort. I then went down the river to a lower pool, and in half an hour came up again and changed my heuck. I began to suspect that having *raised* the fish so often, I had become too anxious, and given him too little law—or jerked the heuck away before he had closed his mouth upon it. And as I had a heavy rod and good line, and the castin' line, which I had gotten thrae the *Sherra*, had three fadom o' pleit gut at the end of it, and the *flee* was buskit on a three plies o' sawmon gut, sae I was na feard for my tackle. I

had putten a cockle-stane at the side o' the water  
fornent the place where he raise ; forbye I kend fu'  
weel where he was lyin' : it was at the side o' a  
muckle blue clint that made a clour i' the rough  
throat, e'en when the Queed was in a brown flood,  
as she had been for twa days afore. Aweel, I thought  
I wad try a plan o' auld *Juniperbank's* when he had  
raised a sawmon mair nor ance. I keepit my eyne  
hard closed when the heuck was commin owre the  
*place*. Peace be here ! I fand as gif I had catched  
the branch o' an aik tree swingin' and sabbin' in a  
storm o' wind. Ye needna doobt I opened my eyne !  
An' what think ye was the sawmon aboot ?—turnin'  
and rowin' doon the tap o' the water owre him and  
owre him (as ye hae seen a hempie o' a callant row  
down a green brae side) at great speed, makin' a  
fearfu' jumblin' and splashin', and shakin' the tap  
o' the wand at sic a rate, that deil hae me but I  
thocht he wad hae shaken my arms aff at the  
shouther joints, tho' I said to mysel' they were guy  
firm putten on. I never saw a fish do the like but  
ane i' the Auld Brig pool in the Darnwick-water. I  
jalouse they want to unspin the line ; for a fish has  
far mair cunnin' and wiles aboot him than mony  
ane wad think. At ony rate it was a fashious plan  
this I fell on ; for or he war to the fut o' the pool I  
was tired o' him and his wark, and sae was he, Ise  
warrant ye. For when he fand the water turnin'  
shallow, he wheeled aboot, and I ran up the pool as  
fast as I could follow him, gien him a' the line I  
could at the same time ; and when it was just about  
a' off the pirn, and he was commin into the throat,

he wheeled again in a jiffy, and cam straight for my feet as if he had been shot out o' a cannon ! I thocht it was a' owre atween us, for I fand naething at the wand as the line was soommin i' the pool a' the way doon. I was deed sure I had lost him after a' my quirks ; for whan they cast a cantrip o' that kind, it's done to slacken the line to let them draw the heuck out o' their mouths wi' their teethy toun—an' they are amaist sure to do sae. But he was owre weel heuckit, this ane, to work his purpose in that gyse, as ye sal hear ; for when by dint o' runnin' back thrae the water as fast as I could, and windin' up the line I had brought a bow on the tap o' the rod, I fand the fish had riestit in the deepest part o' the pool, trying a' that teeth an' toun could do to get haud o' the heuck ; and there did he lie for nearly an hour, for I had plenty o' time to look at my watch, and now and then to tak' mony a snuff too. But I was certain by this time that he was fast heuckit, and I raised him again by cloddin stanes afore him as near as I durst for hittin' the line. But when I got him up at last there was mickle mair to do than I thocht of ; for he ran up the pool and doon the pool I dar' say fifty times, till my feet wur dour sair wi' gangin sae lang on the channel : then he gaed owre the stream a'thegither. I was glad to let him change his gait ony way ; and he gaed down to *Glenbenna*, that was in Whitebank's water, and I wrocht him lang there. To mak' a lang tale short, before I could get at him wi' the gaff, I was baith hungry an' tyrt ; an' after a' he was firm heuckit, in the teughest part o' the body, at the outside o'

the edge o' the wick bane. He was a clean sawmon, an' three an' twenty meal pounds."

No creature is more capricious than a salmon. One of the Lairds of Makerstoun, many years ago, had a fisherman named Robin Hope, who, like many of his brethren on the Tweed, was an original. Attending his master on a day that was considered quite a killing one, not a fish would stir. "What is the meaning of this, Robin?" said the Laird. "Deed sir, I dinna ken," said Robin; "for sometimes they will tak' the thoom o' yere mitten, if ye would throw it in, and at itheres they wad na look at the Lady o Makerstoun and a' her braws."

Salmon never take well when the weather is about to change; it is therefore useless to go out when the mercury remains at this point. When it first sets in for a continuance of dry weather the fish will rise about your hook, and only break the surface of the water; but before a flood they will spring clean out of it, for the purpose, perhaps, of filling their air-bladder before travelling.

These sportive fellows, however, sometimes get into a scrape by being hooked outside. A salmon of ten pounds was caught in the Skurry-wheel, at Sprouston, in the following curious manner. The fish were rising wantonly, but not taking the fly; in striking at one of them the line looped over its tail, and the hook catching the line on the upper side the fish was fairly snared, and at length killed, after showing extraordinary sport.

Sometimes, also, they will leap out for pastime, and at others from fear. Thus if a salmon has been



ON RUTHERFORD WATER.

Photo, Macgregor, Kelso.



once touched sharply with the hook, when he sees the fly above him on some future day he will often vault into the air. I once saw a marked instance of this.

A very young friend who was fishing with me saw a fish spring over his line in this manner, and he kept flinging at him with the same result, the salmon always moving forward, till he fairly chased him up the water some hundred yards ; that is to say, from "The Webbs," above Craigover Boat Hole in the Mertoun-water, half way up to Maxwell Burn foot. Believe me, it was a pleasant thing to behold. My friend would not be denied. Master *Salmo Salar*, and he was a lusty one, would not accept, but acknowledged the courteous tender of *Michael Scott* at every cast, in the manner I have described. Thus, they held correspondence with each other a considerable time without coming in contact. At length piscator began to suspect that the repulsive qualities were on his side, and the attractive ones only on the part of the fugitive, who knew,

— “but how it mattered not,  
It was the wizard *Michael Scott*.”

So he turned his back upon him reluctantly ; but, casting a lingering look behind, he could not forbear returning and doubling his defeat. This fish had probably been touched by a fly before.

That night, the hostel being full, we slept in a double-bedded room. At the dead hour of twelve I was awakened by loud cries of “I have him, I have him !” “Hold him fast then,” said I, for I thought he had collared a thief ; but in truth he had not :

he had only got hold of the bell-rope, and was fishing away with it in his dreams, with a salmon, of course, at the end of it. Luckily he did not arouse the Mariternes of the inn : no bell having ever been attached to the pull, which was a mere matter of ornament.

The first thing to be considered in rod fishing is the state of the water proper for the sport ; and I beg that it may all along be borne in mind that my observations relate to the river Tweed only : for it must be obvious that as rivers vary in their depth and volume of water, no general rule for their being in proper order for the fly can be laid down.

The waxing, as it is called, and the progress of a flood, has been already explained in a former part of these pages.

When the Tweed is not clear, but, as it is termed, *drumly*, salmon *that have been some time in the river* never take well ; in such case, when there were no clean fish in the water, I have sometimes had fourteen or fifteen offers without taking above one or two fish. They do not see the fly distinctly, and therefore come at it slowly and with hesitation.\* One would think they had some particular method of holding it awhile by way of experiment, just within the point of their noses ; for I have often struck a salmon sharply, and felt as if my hook was firmly fixed in him, when in a moment afterwards it has come away quite easily ; and this has happened two

\* The modern development of spinning, especially with bright artificial baits, has given the salmon fisherman a much better chance in coloured water. Scrope evidently only used a minnow or parr-tail for his spinning, cf. page 234.—(ED.)

or three times in succession, the water being in the foul state I have mentioned. It must be noted also, that when the river is swoln and discoloured, salmon travel in the daytime, particularly when there is a fresh wind to ruffle the surface of the water ; and as they are intent on their journey, they are not apt to pay much attention to such food as we worthies offer them. Now as this uncertainty of hooking a fish that offers happens to me or to you, so the same thing will occur to every other fisherman that is out on the same day, these animals being all of the same mind ; but I have heard good fishermen in the North say, that they always had the best sport before the river cleared. I suppose it was in shallow streams ; because it is evident that salmon, who always lie at the bottom of the river, or on the edge of a rock near it, could not see the fly at any great depth when the waters were turbid. It must be observed, however, that in more shallow places, where they can distinguish it, there is a great difference between a newly run fish and one that has been some time in the river ; the new one being wild and gamesome, and ignorant of the ways of the world, and the other the very emblem of prudence, and an admirer of the old adage, "*Always look before you leap.*" It is difficult to express by words the exact state of the water I wish to allude to : if it is only moss-stained good sport may be had with clean fish, but there must be a certain degree of transparency.

The upper parts of the Tweed come into order for being fished much sooner than those below

and this in proportion to the depth and volume of water.

It must be owned that fish may occasionally be caught in turbid, and even full water ; but then it must be by a perfect change of system. At such a time the strong streams and usual salmon casts are useless ; and you must throw in the easy cheeks near the land, and in the tails of the streams, where the fish rest in travelling. In this way I once caught five salmon in the Pavilion-water from off the shore, unattended even by a man with a cleik ; whilst my friend, who fished above me in the finest streams in the water, with a boat and all appliances and means to boot, did not rise a single fish ; not from want of skill—for it was Lord Somerville—but simply because the salmon did not lie in their usual seats.

A word or two I will now say about the management of the cleik, which, although it seems simple enough, requires some address. Take care, most worthy attendant—for it is to you I speak—that in the effervescence of your zeal you steer clear of the line, and that after you have struck the fish you tow him steadily to the shore ; and I beg, sir, to caution you, and just merely to hint, that if you attempt one of your flourishes, and try to do all at one rapid jerk, you will have decidedly the worst of it. There must be two motions, a strike, and a haul.

By way of illustration, I must tell you of a gentleman who came to visit me whilst I lived on the banks of the Tay, and was desirous of seeing a salmon caught before he returned to the South ; so I

launched my boat and set to work. Now on these pressing occasions one has commonly a blank day, instead of a show off : not so, however, in the present instance, for in a short time I killed six fish. When I had subdued their strength, I gave up the rod to my companion, who finished them skilfully enough. These fish were from seven to twelve pounds each, as well as I can recollect. I next hooked a large and peremptory salmon ; and when he got weak I could not land, on account of the alders which grew on the margin of the river.

“ Give me the cleik,” said my confident friend ; “ let me come at him. I should like to try my hand at that, as well as at the rod, though it is a savage affair. Do you think I can manage it ? ” “ I have no doubt of it,” said I, — “ tam Marti, quam Mercurio.” But pray let me interrogate you a little. “ Can you swim ? ”

“ Swim ! no, not I ; why do you ask me that ? ”

“ Because assuredly, if you do not take care, that salmon will pull you into the water ; so be canny.”

There was an open laugh at this, and a look of defiance at the fish. Rash youth ! you stretched forth your dexter, and executed a well-directed stroke at the animal, thinking to tuck him out of the water at one coup ; but you had very considerably miscalculated your own powers, and the weight you were to encounter. There were two things decidedly against you ; one, that the salmon was three feet long, and lay with his broadside towards you, so that you had a heavy weight to lift, and a considerable column of water to displace ;

the other, that you were standing in a boat, and had an unstable balance. Thus, you were tilted forward in a way with which your will had nothing to do ; so that had not I, even I, Harry Otter, laid hold of the skirts of your coat, we should have been fishing with the long net for you : as it was, the resistance only threw you prostrate in the boat ; and I was sorry to see you so much incommoded by the water which had not been ladled out of it : inheriting all the valour of your ancestors, you still grasped the cleik, and, as I pushed the boat ashore, struggled your very best, till you dragged your prey to firm land.

He was not a clean salmon, nor was he the cause of cleanliness in others ; but, as you may remember, exceeded twenty pounds.

The success of a salmon fisher not only depends upon the weather, but upon the state of the river as it is affected by the rains ; so that one may be weeks, and even months, on the spot, without the possibility of taking a fish with the rod. The water may be too low to admit of fish coming up, or it may be too full in flood, with diurnal waxings ; so that sportsmen who come from a distance, and have not much time to spare, may be grievously disappointed. In the upper part of the Tweed, real good rod fishing lasts but a few days after a spate : indeed, the water there is not properly supplied with fish till there are two or three spates in succession.

The hills are now so well drained, that the flood runs off rapidly ; and thus the river soon falls in,

and becomes too low for the fly, except in the strong streams.

Before these complete drainages took place, the Tweed kept full a much longer time than it does at present ; for the rains which fell remained in the mosses, which gave out the water gradually, like a sponge.

Now the hill sides are scored with innumerable little drains, which empty themselves into the burns, which burns soon become impetuous torrents ; thus suddenly supplied, the Ettrick, the Yarrow, the Leader-water, the Ale, the Tiviot, and the many other streams that empty themselves into the Tweed, come raving down from the mountains and from the lakes, and, with their united volume, raise that river to an alarming height in the space of a few hours, which then spreads over the haughs, and sometimes sweeps off corn and cattle, and levels the bridges in its irresistible course. In these awful spates, the water is too strong and turbid for fish to travel : the soil is washed away partially from the ploughed lands ; and, as the practice of liming them is very prevalent, the waters are obnoxious to the fish. I have often wondered how the trout could possibly survive this state of things ; but they do survive it, by keeping at the eddies and close to the banks amongst the grass, where the pout nets haul them out by dozens.

Though I have given the foregoing instructions with much pleasure, I would not advise any one who wishes to stand well with society to utter a word about his propensity for fishing. It is generally

thought a poor, inanimate occupation ; and so, indeed, it is in some cases ; and yet the passion is so strong, that I believe the sedentary angler who catches a roach or dace, worthless though he be, and weak and diminutive withal, has as much pleasure in his way, as the proud conqueror of a twenty-pound salmon.

I was once rowing on the Thames when a friend hailed me from afar, and beckoned with joyous and eager solicitation. Though I was pressed for time, I pulled up to him against the wind and stream, for I thought he had something of great moment to impart ; but it was only to say, " that I would be glad to hear he had caught two dozen gudgeons that morning." But I do not think I was glad, at least not particularly so, though he was a very worthy man.

As for myself, if I am ever so indiscreet as to utter a word about fishing, I am always asked, " if it does not require a great deal of patience." Now, these sort of interrogators are in Cimmerian darkness as to the real thing. But I tell them, that to be a first-rate salmon fisher requires such active properties as they never dreamed of in their philosophy. It demands (salmon fishing at least) strength of arm and endurance of fatigue, and a capability of walking in the sharp streams for eight or ten hours together, with perfect satisfaction to one's self ; and that early in the spring season, when the clean salmon first come forward. In after life, people are considerably addicted to boats, and to go about attended like admirals ; that is what we must all come to.

But your real professor, who has youth on his side, should neither have boats nor boots, but be sufficient in himself. No delay, no hauling the boat up the stream, but in and out, like an otter ; even like we ourselves in the time of our prime, Fahrenheit being below zero. We then pitched our tent under Craigover rocks, on Tweedside, and slept in it, that we might go forth, rod in hand, at five o'clock each morning to our aqueous pastime. It is true that the late John Lord Somerville objected to our tent, as being a white object, and therefore likely to prevent the fish from passing by it to his upper water. But we proved to him, by mathematical lines adroitly drawn, that it was not within the range of a salmon's optics. So our tent stood, till a violent storm assailed us one night with barbarous fury, tore up the pegs to which the ropes were fastened, and gave up all our canvass to the winds. Thus, we got an ample soaking in our bed, in which we cut a pretty figure, no doubt, when disclosed to public gaze ; but we were not blown into the Tweed ; so that, upon the whole, we were uncommonly fortunate. But we discard ourselves for the present.

I say then, and will maintain it, that a salmon fisher should be strong in the arms, or he will never be able to keep on thrashing for ten or twelve hours together with a rod eighteen or twenty feet long, with ever and anon a lusty salmon at the end of his line, pulling like a wild horse with the lasso about him. Now he is obliged to keep his arms aloft, that the line may clear the rocks—now he must rush into

the river, then back out with nimble pastern, always keeping a steady and proper strain of line ; and he must preserve his self-possession, “ even in the very tempest and whirlwind of the sport,” when the salmon rushes like a rocket. This is not moody work ; it keeps a man alive and stirring. Patience indeed !

It is indispensable to have a quick eye, and a ready hand : your fly, or its exact position, should never be lost sight of ; and you should imagine every moment of the livelong day that an extraordinary large salmon is coming at it. No man can do any thing properly unless he is sanguine, and his whole heart and soul is in the business. “ Remember, my good people all, I do not wish to press this laborious sport unfairly upon you : excuse me, but it may be you are not exactly fit for it—‘ *non cuivis homini,* ’ ” etc. You may saunter about with a gauze net and two sticks, if you prefer it, and catch butterflies. Every man to his vocation ; but “ what is a gentleman without his recreations ? ”

There is a speculation in angling that gives great zest to the sport. You may catch a moderate-sized fish, or a distinguished one ; or, mayhap, a monster of such stupendous dimensions as will render your name immortal ; and he may be painted, and adorn some fishing-tackle shop in London, like Colonel Thornton’s\* pike, which threw *Newmarket* on his

\* Colonel T. Thornton, *A Sporting Tour through the Northern Parts of England and a great part of the Highlands of Scotland*, published in 1804. An amusing and interesting memento of the spacious days of sport. The Colonel’s great pike was caught on Loch Petuliche and weighed, on his representation, 49 lb.—(ED.)

back as he was landing him—a lad, says the Colonel, so called from the place of his nativity. Of course you expect the latter phenomenon every cast. You see him in your mind's eye eternally following your fly, and you are ready to strike from second to second. It is true he does not actually come, as experience teaches. But what of that? he may come in an hour—in a minute—in a moment; the thing is possible, and that is enough for an angler.

A friend of mine (sacred be his name!) of great repute for his dexterity with the rod, and celebrated for his agreeable and amiable qualities, as well as for his intelligence and various accomplishments, had this poetical facility of seeing what did not really exist in substance. A curious instance of this popular talent occurred at a friend's house in the country with whom he was staying. There was a fine piece of water in the park, well stored with fish, where he used to spend most part of the morning, rod in hand; so that his perseverance excited considerable admiration from the host, as well as from his guests. Not having been very successful, his ardour at length began to flag. It was a pity, for it is a pleasant thing to be excited. What was to be done? You shall see. A report was raised that there was an enormous pike seen in the water, about the length of a decent-sized alligator. He was said to have maimed a full-grown swan, and destroyed two cygnets, besides sundry ducks. At first he was no more believed in than the great sea snake, which encloses at least half the world in his folds. But after the lapse of a few days,

the keeper came to the private ear of my friend, and told him that a *mortal* large pike was basking amongst some weeds, and could be seen plainly. " You are sure to catch en, sir." He was rewarded for this intelligence, and exhorted to keep the important secret from the other visitors at the mansion.

When piscator, cunning fellow ! thought that all were out of the way, employed in hunting, shooting, or some other occupation, he and John Barnes the keeper glided down secretly to the awful spot, and they there descried the semblance of a fish so enormous that it was doubted if any thing less than a small rope could hold him. The sportsman was astounded—the keeper was not ; for the said awful animal was nothing more than a large painted piece of wood, carved deftly by himself into the shape of a pike, painted according to order, and stuck in the natural position by means of a vertical prop, which could not be discovered amongst the weeds. It was too bad, really a great deal too bad ; but tolerably ingenious, and beautifully deceptive. The gentleman approached with tact and caution, and the eyes of the fish glared upon him ; as well they might, for they were very large and dazzling, being made of glass, and originally designed to be inserted in a great horned owl which the keeper had stuffed.

" What a prodigious fish, John ! "

" Very perdidious indeed, sir."

" What eyes he has ! "

" So he has, sir."



*Ed. Cooke, del.*

WHAT EYES HE HAS!



"I'll try him with a roach. There—it went in beautifully, and he did not move."

"No, he wont take it no how. Give him a frog ; he seems a difficult fish."

Piscator did tender him a very lively one in vain ; in short, he offered him every bait he could possibly think of, running through all the devices and temptations he was master of. Cautious in his approaches, that the supposed fish might not see him, he always advanced to make his cast upon his knees, to the no small merriment of his friends, who were looking at him through a telescope from the windows of the mansion.

Well, thus he spent the whole morning ; waiting, however, at times, for a cloud to intercept the sunbeams, and a breath of air to ruffle the surface of the water. When these came, he would set to work again with renovated hopes ; till at last, tired and discomfited, he bent his steps homewards. On his arrival there, he was accosted on the very threshold by some of the guests.

"Oh ! you have been fishing all the morning, I see ; but what could make you stay out so long, and get away so cunningly with the keeper ? "

"Why, to tell you the truth, Barnes (you know what a good creature he is) told me of an immense pike that was lying amongst the weeds at the end of the lake ; he must be the same that swallowed the cygnets. I never saw so enormous a monster in fresh water."

*Omnès.*—" Well, where is he—where is he ? let us look at him."

*Host.*—“ John, tell the cook we will have him for dinner to-day. Dutch sauce, remember.”

*Piscator.*—“ You need not be in such a hurry to send to the cook, for I am sorry to say I did not catch him.”

*Host.*—“ Not catch him—not catch him ! Impossible, with all your skill, armed as you are to the teeth, with roach, bleak, minnows, frogs, kill-devils, and the deuce knows what. Not catch him ! Come, you’re joking.”

*Piscator.*—“ Serious, I assure you. I never was so beat before, and yet I never fished better ; but though I did not absolutely hook him, *he ran at me several times.*”

An universal shout of laughter followed this assertion, which made my friend not a little suspicious ; but he never again touched upon the subject. Some time afterwards, wandering near the scene of his operations, he saw an immense carving of a pike placed upon a pole near the margin of the water, and painted beautifully : he guessed he had seen him before.

Let us now return to the Scotch rivers.

The Tay, which rises from, and is approximated by, vast and desolate regions of moss and moor, preserves its volume of water much longer than those rivers that have their sources in a more pastoral and agricultural country, and of course is much longer in good order for fly fishing. But when the black clouds burst over the vast wilderness of mountains, a hundred torrents gleam on all sides, rush down the rocky ravines, and change

the burns into turbulent rivers, which pour their floods into the mighty channel of the Tay: thus this river probably carries more water to the ocean than any other in Great Britain.

I have read much of the rapids of the great rivers in America, and the difficulty of steering and shooting down them in safety; and the accompaniments of the scenery, and the descriptions of these cataracts, have always appeared to me singularly wild and picturesque. They made so great an impression upon my mind that, to form a more correct idea of the sort of thing, I meditated a voyage down the Tay when, filled with her countless tributaries, she goes raging to the ocean. Besides this inducement, I had some small boats which I wished to take to Perth by water, instead of land carriage; for I was changing my quarters from Meikleour on the banks of the Tay to the Pavilion on those of the Tweed. These boats were built on Tweedside for fly fishing in small waters, and in warm weather were held for the fisherman by a man who waded in the water, lest the salmon should be scared away by the motion or appearance of the oars, or canting pole, as it might be. Being, therefore, of a very light and diminutive construction, they were not exactly calculated to endure the buffets of large and tempestuous waters: one is not apt, however, to be over nice about such things, and accordingly I resolved to put them to the proof. Nor was an opportunity long wanting. After a night of heavy rain, the Tay, which flowed through the park of Meikleour, rose to a fearful extent. This

was exactly the sort of thing to suit me; so I proposed to my fisherman, Charles Purdie, to go down the flood to Perth, a distance of about twelve miles by water. We did so; and I here insert the particulars of our voyage, as they may serve to give an idea of a Scottish spate.

We were standing at the foot of the sloping lawn before my house; and as Charlie Purdie bent his regards on the frightful violence of the flood, I thought he did not half like to embark on it. In fact, he did not only disapprove of the general conduct of the river, but also of the peculiar rocky nature of the channel in which it was its pleasure to gallop along to the ocean. Moreover, he knew there was an obstruction in the river at a place called the Linn of Campsie, about four miles below the proposed starting-place, where at the arrival of his little boat he did not anticipate much pleasure. In fact, neither Charlie nor his master conceived it would be possible to pass the falls into the Linn, since no boat could do so in the ordinary state of the water without being upset, or dashed to shivers. They would see how things looked, however, on their arrival at the spot, and act accordingly.

"Now then, loosen my boat, Charlie: I will go first; and take care you do not run foul of me."

The boats being unmoored, we shot down the river in a moment, and were soon at the end of the park, where the Isla comes into the Tay. This additional volume of water increased our velocity; we guided our boats into the main currents, and away we

went with the swiftness of a steam-engine. Rocks and woods opened to our view in an instant, and in an instant vanished behind us. Thus we were driven along with great fury till we came within the sound of the great falls of the Linn of Campsie : soon we descried before us the awful barrier of rocks which rose up right athwart the stream, extending from bank to bank.

The waters had worn their way in some places through this barrier, and tumbled madly through the rocky gorges ; down they went, thundering with stunning sound into the enormous cauldron below. Then arose the strife—the dashing of the spray—the buffeting against the banks—the swirling of the eddies, crested with large masses of foam—all was in hideous commotion.

This state of things threatened to put an end to our projected voyage. To go right onwards through the centre gorge was to pass to certain destruction : as well might one hope to shoot in safety down the falls of Schaffhausen.

I was prepared for all this, and was quite aware of the impediment before I began my voyage ; so I did as I had made up my mind to do before I started. I pulled towards some alder trees which grew on the bank above the fall, and held my boat fast by the branches ; I then told Charlie to secure his boat also with a rope, and to land and reconnoitre. We were enabled to do these things without much difficulty, as the water was in some measure arrested in its course above the fall, being slightly bayed back by the barrier of rocks. Being on terra

firma, my hero looked ruefully at the torrents : one alone appeared something like being practicable ; and it was one that, in the mean state of the river, was nothing but a dry channel. Whether our small craft could shoot down it without foundering or not was by no means evident to the eye, though a practised one, of the explorer. He was, however, somewhat encouraged by two fishermen who were mending their nets. They thought, they said, that we " might possibly descend in safety, if we managed our boats well." Charlie looked, and sighed, and looked again : the thing was evidently not in harmony with his ideas ; for he could not swim himself, and he doubted whether his boat would either, when it arrived at the bottom of the fall. However, I decided that I would try the thing alone ; and if it should prove a failure, the example was not, of course, to be followed. So I brought my little boat some way above the cataract, with her head up the stream, and by rowing against it let her fall by degrees stern foremost, by which means I had a clear view before me, and could therefore steer to a nicety. She went down most agreeably, though in nearly a vertical position, but pitched upon a rock below the fall ; but before any harm happened, I swung her off by inclining my body to and fro. My fisherman followed successfully ; and having passed the wide-spreading Linn, the channel of the Tay became more contracted, and we resumed our former pace, shooting down the rapids like an arrow, and by occasional swift snatches of the oars avoiding the breakers around

us. So we passed amongst the hanging woods and impending rocks of this romantic river, till we arrived at Stanley, where groups of people were assembled on the hill-top, who shouted to us with all their might, and made signs and gestures, the meaning of which I could not comprehend, but they seemed to be warning us of some impending danger : I could not catch the import of their words, as the sound was but faintly heard amidst the din of the waves. So I did not perplex myself with attending to them, but thought it wisest to trust to my own discretion, which fortunately carried the boats safely to their place of destination. I learned afterwards, that seeing our boats were mere insignificant cockle-shells borne down by the flood with great impetuosity, they were fearful that we should be carried down the mill-dam, and come in contact with the machinery. But a better fate awaited us than such a Quixotic one ; and after a little rough work, in which we shipped a reasonable quantity of water, we at length approached the vast bleaching grounds of Perth, where the river swept swift and ample in an even channel under a wooded bank studded with villas ; we then darted through the middle arch of the beautiful bridge in the town, and hauled up our boats on a wharf below it.

## CHAPTER VII

" Whate'er Lorraine light touched with softening hue,  
Or savage Rosa dashed, or learned Poussin drew."

**E**XPLORING one morning the upper parts of the river, with my trout rod in my hand, I came to a little meadow in a vale where the stream played in mazes beneath hanging coppices. In this sequestered spot, I espied a gentle angler—I may say particularly gentle. His mode of fishing appeared so novel, that I was induced to pry a little into it ; so I ventured to approach him, and asked what sport he had been having.

" Oh, glorious, glorious—perfectly enchanting ! All Paradise is around me ! "

I took notice, however, that although he held his rod pretty much in the usual piscatorial position of altitude, his fly was by no means on the water, but lay very comfortably dry upon the furzes on the bank side, and that, whatever his hand might pretend to be doing, his mind was not at that moment particularly bent upon a capture. Whilst he stood entranced, I took the liberty of lifting up the lid of his basket, in which I despaired nothing but a pair of gloves—not a fish reposed in it. It was clean, new, and Cockney-like, and I ventured to give him a hint to this effect.

" Well now I declare, sir, that is very singular ; because I certainly caught two trout, and put them into my creel. But I dare say you are a little absent, and did not notice them ; I am somewhat absent myself occasionally."

He examined the basket, and found only gloves by themselves—gloves.

" Where can I have put them ? "

" Indeed I can't guess, sir."

He then began to shuffle about and examine his waistcoat pockets and those of his pantaloons, nay, actually his fob.

" Perhaps, sir, you did not find quite room enough in your fob, and put them into your coat pocket for fear they should soil the basket."

" Bless me ! so I did ; and here they are, truly. I see now how it is ; in a hurry, and whilst I was wrapt in admiration of the scenery, I put the gloves where the fish should have been, and *vice versa*—nothing could be more natural."

This he said with a simplicity worthy of the golden age. But he declared that although he was not at that moment very intent on the sport, he did like fishing exceedingly. " Because," said he, " it requires no parade of attendance, like other field sports ; it leads to the most beautiful spots ; and I take up my rod and my painting box at any hour I please, and saunter over the flowery meads, in a state of tranquil enjoyment, amidst all the most pleasing images of rural life."

I observed there was considerable excitement in fishing occasionally, as well as tranquillity. " For

instance, now," said I, " there is a sea trout in that run of water that will make your heart dance, if you should happen to hook him ; I saw him put his head up at the cheek of the current, and he had a wilful look, and is likely to make most pernicious runs when hooked ; for these sort of fish are very active and strong. If you will give me leave, I will change your trout fly for a larger one, and instruct you how to proceed, as from the nature of your tackle I conclude you are not accustomed to fish of this description. There now—go a little higher up the stream ; throw above him, and bring the fly gently round ; and if he comes at it, do not strike him too hard, or you will break your slender tackle. If you get hold of him, we shall see how he is to be managed ; he will put your tranquillity to the test, I promise you."

He grasped the rod, and held it aloft ; then, after a considerable pause, " He is exactly in the right spot," said he. " Precisely," I replied.

" What a rich red tone of colour he has—how well it tells in the shadow ! He will come in capitally."

" He is not red, I assure you, but clear as silver, and I wish he *may* come in capitally."

" Bless me ! he looks red to me, and I must take him immediately ; he is exactly the thing I wanted."

So saying, to my amazement, he dropped the rod, and pulled out a sketch book, in which he began painting a red cow in water colours that was reposing under a hawthorn bush on the opposite bank, just beyond the stream where the fish was lying, and which had been the real object of his remarks.

When he had done with the cow, however, I put the rod once more into his hands, and reminded him of the fish.

"Now throw a few yards above the spot where you see the water boiling around that large blue stone. Very well; advance a step every time you throw. Capital! Now you are precisely at the fish. Strike him gently if he rises. Well done!—by Paul Potter you have him! Hold up the top of your rod, and keep an even steady pull upon him."

"How can I keep a steady pull upon such a wild animal? Why he springs out of the water, and whizzes about in it, like that fire-work called a serpent."

"Be steady—be steady, or he will whiz you about with a witness. Shorten your line; get into the water, and follow him."

"What a cruel speech! Why I never learned to swim. You are exceedingly inconsiderate indeed, sir."

"Swim! why the water on this channel is scarcely over your ankles, and I will help you if you should happen to stumble."

"Then we should both meet a watery grave together. I have often read of such calamities."

"In with you—in with you, I say, or he will be off. There, I told you so; he has broke your line; and, pray pardon me, but pretty work you have made of it with your tranquillity."

"Well, as it seems to make you so uneasy, I will go a little way into the water, though I shall not enjoy it."

"Why, what is the use of wetting yourself, now you have lost the fish?"

"True, true—I did not sufficiently consider that; so now I will go back, and see if I can improve my cow."

This was abundantly philosophical; but intelligible enough to me, who being very much addicted to painting myself, know how absorbing a passion it is.

The cow was a good cow—drawn in a clean and decisive manner, with a correct knowledge of the anatomy of the animal. I praised accordingly, and we began naturally enough to talk upon the principles of landscape painting; and as we both agreed pretty well as to those principles, so we both laid down the law with as much confidence as if we were the lineal descendants of Zeuxis or Apelles—a fashion, I must observe, most particularly prevalent at the present day. I fear it is not worth while to notice our remarks. I will write them down, however, at a venture; and here they follow.

"View-taking," said the cow limner, "I consider as of a distinct character from landscape painting. The interest of the first, as a work of art, in all highly cultivated countries, must in a great measure depend upon accidental causes. Trees in hedge-rows, and most other positions, have been planted or removed by the hand of man for profit or convenience, so that they are rarely found in the most natural or effective situations; other objects share the same fate, and even the vivid verdure is produced by artificial means. Still it is right for the view-

taker to copy every thing before him just as it really presents itself. This may be desirable as a remembrance, or an exact illustration of the scenery of a country, and indeed occasionally, by some happy accident, as a work of art ; it may also have great interest as representing passages in rural life. But it is obvious that, in a country highly cultivated, a scene very accurately delineated represents the materials only, and not the composition of nature, strictly so called.

“ On the other hand, the landscape painter should aim much higher ; he should get all his materials from the most striking and characteristic specimens in nature, and study such forms and combinations as may make an interesting impression on the mind. Trees, rocks, water, mountains—all his materials he should arrange upon the same principle that an historical painter observes in composing from living models. He should address the imagination rather than the eye, and endeavour to convey to his work some prevailing character, which may awaken a corresponding sympathy and interest in the contemplative beholder.

“ As to colour and effect, every tinge of light that is beautiful and striking, every varied appearance that the change of the hour and the seasons may bring forth, should be marked down and coloured on the spot. This should be the unremitting practice of the artist, that his works may bear the impress and truth of nature.

“ Taking care to lay his emphasis upon those dominant objects that give beauty, character, or

sublimity to the landscape, he should keep all the rest subordinate, though intelligible ; always bearing in mind that the eye sees those objects only *in detail* upon which it is immediately fixed. If, on the other hand, he copies from nature every individual thing before him exactly as he sees it, when his eye rests upon that individual object alone, he does not represent the scene such as he saw it in nature at one general and comprehensive view, but as it appeared to him by examining separate parts one after the other, each part having a distinct focus. If then he adopts this method of proceeding, he will paint upon a false, though a very prevalent principle, and his picture cannot fail to have an unpleasant and irritating effect.

“ *Infelix operis summâ, quia ponere totum  
Nesciet.*”

He paused a little to take breath, as well indeed he might ; so I took the opportunity to lay down the law also, and to remark that he must have arrived at his conclusions from a study of the paintings of those eminent masters whose works are sealed with perfection, and sanctified by time—productions that elevate us above the level of common thought, and carry us into the regions of poetry and romance.

“ In the pictures of Claude, by a happy treatment of his subject you see more than the bare materials of common nature. There the glow of Italy lies radiant before you : the eye passes from the flowery fore-ground, with its tall trees just moved by the zephyr, and wanders from distance to distance over clustering groves, and classical ruins, amidst the

quiet lapse of waters, and all the pastoral beauty that poets have delighted to feign.

“ Directly opposite to the blandishments of this great master, but true to itself, is the genius of Salvator Rosa. Little recked he of Arcadian scenes. Mysterious and elevated in thought, he delighted to stalk over the wilds of Calabria ; and there, in regions desolate and dolorous, by the side of some impending rock, amidst the din of torrents plunging down to the horrid gulf below him, he formed a style, original, savage, and indomitable. Nothing entered into his pictures that was commonplace or mean. His figures were banditti, forlorn travellers, or wrecked mariners. His trees the monarch chestnut, forming impenetrable forests, or blasted and riven by the thunderbolt. All his forms were grand ; even his winged clouds had a stern aspect, and partook of the general character. Titian, Claude, Poussin, Salvator Rosa—these, and some others of the good old times, drew the poetry and soul of landscape, and not its mere dead image—and this is the triumph of art.”

I fancy my new friend the artist paid very little attention to my remarks, which I am not at all surprised at ; for he began to soliloquise in an absent manner about Poussin, whom he said I should have placed between Claude and Rosa ; and as he seemed to threaten rather a long encomium, I pretended to see a fish rise, and glided away quietly ; for I thought enough had been said on the subject of painting already. As I stole off, however, I caught a few unconnected expressions ; such as “ dark

groves and solitude—storms—tempests—and alpine ridges.” Then he grew somewhat classical, and began to recite from Virgil—

“ Tot congesta manu præruptis oppida saxis,  
Fluminaque antiquos subterlabentia muros.”

At this I walked faster and faster, till I got totally out of hearing. Not through dislike of the subject did I make my escape, for it was one after my own heart ; but my rod was in my hand, and “ *hoc age* ” has always been my maxim. Besides the day began to alter, and a fine fresh breeze arose, which came up the river ; clouds appeared over the horizon, which kept gathering, and brought on slight showers and passing shadows, with occasional bursts of sunshine that glittered on the curl of the water. Now, as far as my experience goes, this is the best sort of weather for sport. The prejudice, notwithstanding, I believe, runs in favour of a grey day ; but such a one has often deluded my expectations : at which time I have found the fish dull and sulky, when I was in hopes they would be up and stirring. It is not meet that they should study Zimmermann.

It was now the month of September, and I was expecting to catch some of the grey scull that come forward at that season. These fish are of a goodly shape ; but though fresh from the sea are not quite so glossy in their scales, or so rich in flavour, as your brown-backed salmon that comes up early in the spring. They are altogether of a greyer colour than that beautiful fish, and derive their name from that circumstance.

So soon as I had changed my tackle, my enthusiastic companion came sauntering up to me. I am not quite clear that he was fully sensible of my presence, for his heart seemed still to be amongst the Apennines with Poussin. I made an attempt to dislodge him, and bring him down to the level of my own ideas.

" You know," said I, " that Gaspar was a great sportsman, though it is not probable that he ever caught a salmon, which is a northern fish ; but if you will condescend to transport yourself from the banks of the Arno to those of the Tweed, and to walk an hour or two with me, I think I can promise that you shall see such a feat performed."

*Stranger* (abstractedly) :

“ Fluminaque antiquos subterlabentia muros.”

“ Come now, sink Virgil and the artist a little ; put your sketch-book in your pocket, and let us see what can be done with the salmon. Your quotations, my dear sir, with your permission, will keep, as they have kept, for ages—

‘ Adde tot egregias urbes.’

No, no ; there are no eminent cities or towns here, only Melrose and Gattonside ; and if you call these ‘ egregias urbes,’ you are egregiously mistaken.”

He made no reply, but looked at me with a smile that seemed directed at the simplicity and absence of his own character.

“ Now,” said I, “ as you seem to have descended from your stilts, which I beg to say are very becoming, though somewhat out of season, I will tell

you how all people are not exactly of our way of thinking, as to the triumph of art and these classical illusions ; imagining, on the contrary, that painting is a sleight of hand, and comes by intuition.

“ I was lately sauntering with my painting-box in the romantic glen beneath the towers

‘ Where Roslin’s chiefs uncoffined lie ;  
Each baron, for a sable shroud,  
Sheathed in his iron panoply.’

As I went along I traced the mazes of the river, in some places brawling among the rocks, and at others gliding silently through the mossy stones. I was thus endeavouring to find out such points of view as had most interest, and to investigate the peculiar character in which the charm of the scene consisted.

“ Having at length settled all this to my satisfaction, and marked in the outline of a scene with a piece of white crayon, preparatory to colouring it in oil, a very respectable-looking lady came sailing up to me, and begged to look at my canvass. The day being somewhat advanced, she asked me how many sketches I had made that morning ; and upon my telling her that the one she was looking at was the first, she replied with very perfect exultation that her daughters had not been half an hour in the glen before they made nearly a bookfull of drawings ; but then, indeed, there were very few people so gifted as her daughters. I acquiesced in good faith ; for I really knew no human beings that could do the same thing in the same time, and perhaps I might add in the same manner ; so I concluded that the talent

of these young ladies, like Madame Laffarge's genius for pastry, was 'colossal.'

"' Then they never learned,' continued the lady ; ' it was all pure genius. Indeed Maria showed a singular facility for taking likenesses at three years old. Sir Thomas Lawrence had admired them very much.'

" I bowed, and did not doubt it. In a short time the young ladies themselves, and very pretty and sprightly ones they were, came tripping up.

"' Oh, mamma, we have been here only an hour, and have brought away all the scenery of the glen ! '

"' Only forty minutes, upon honour, Maria.'

"' There, sir, you see my daughters do not throw away their time like some people.'

" I was not quite so sure of this ; but a look of admiration on my part followed of course. The young ladies then began to discourse on art, and to ask what was my peculiar method of getting up sketches.

"' Pray, sir,' said the accomplished Maria, ' do you make your trees in twos, or in threes ? '

" As I did not comprehend the exact meaning of these terms of art, she was pleased to illustrate by favouring me with a sight of one of her recent performances. The trees she particularly alluded to, I found, were those which represented a distant mass of wood. In executing a tree in such situations I was instructed that a sort of flourish should be made, consisting of two segments of a circle, just as birds are drawn in prints ; and this is doing trees in *twos—in threes*, another segment was added ; and

thus the mystery was solved—the whole was executed in a running flourish with admirable facility. I cannot conscientiously aver that any one of the leaves of the sketch books of these intelligent young ladies contained what might be termed a drawing, but still there was something about them that might put a person of imagination very much in mind of drawings."

Thus, having beguiled the attention of Mr. Tintern (for that was the stranger's name) from the summits in which he had been soaring, I found him quite ready to receive an impression of a more humble kind, and he attended me in my walk, nothing loth. I was very much gratified with his company ; for, besides his talent and simplicity of character, there was such an appearance of benevolent feeling in much of his conversation, which I have not thought it necessary to mention, that no one could avoid being taken with him.

I commenced operations at the Carry-wheel, which is nearly at the head of the Pavilion-water, and had not made four casts before I hooked a fish. He was evidently diminutive ; but, dwarf as he was, he thought a good deal of himself, and was prodigal of the little strength which nature had given him. I thought him conceited, and so hauled him on shore at once without any ceremony. He proved to be a river trout of four pounds—a silly-looking creature enough.

Well, I went forward and caught a few gilses and salmon in the upper Pavilion-water, not worth mentioning, except as the sport had the effect of rousing

my new friend from his abstraction ; indeed I met with nothing remarkable till I came to the Kingswell Lees. Now every one knows that the Kingswell Lees, in fisherman's phrase, fishes off land ; so there I stood on *terrâ durâ* amongst the rocks that dip down to the water's edge. Having executed one or two throws, there comes me a voracious fish, and makes a startling dash at "Meg with the muckle mouth." Sharply did I strike the caitiff ; whereat he rolled round disdainful, making a whirl in the water of prodigious circumference : it was not exactly Charybdis, or the Maelstrom, but rather more like the wave occasioned by the sudden turning of a man-of-war's boat. Being hooked, and having by this turn set his nose peremptorily down the stream, he flashed and whizzed away like a rocket. My situation partook of the nature of a surprise. Being on a rocky shore, and having a bad start, I lost ground at first considerably ; but the reel sang out joyously, and yielded a liberal length of line, that saved me from the disgrace of being broke. I got on the best pace I was able, and was on good ground just as my line was nearly all run out. As the powerful animal darted through *Meg's Hole*, I was just able to step back and wind up a few yards of line ; but he still went a killing pace, and when he came near Melrose Bridge he evinced a distressing preference for passing through the farther arch, in which case my line would have been cut by the pier. My heart sunk with apprehension, for he was near the opposite bank. Purdie seeing this, with great presence of mind took up some stones from the

channel, and threw them one by one between the fish and the said opposite bank. This naturally brought Master Salmo somewhat nearer ; but still for a few moments we had a doubtful struggle for it. At length, by lowering the head of the rod, and thus not having so much of the ponderous weight of the fish to encounter, I towed him a little sideways ; and so advancing towards me with propitious fin, he shot through the arch nearest me.

Deeply immersed, I dashed after him as best I might ; and arriving on the other side of the bridge I floundered out upon dry land, and continued the chase. The salmon, "right orgillous and presumptive," still kept the strength of the stream, and, abating nothing of his vigour, went swiftly down the *Whirls* ; then through the *Boat shiel*, and over the shallows, till he came to the throat of the *Elm-wheel*, down which he darted amain. Owing to the bad ground, the pace here became exceedingly distressing. I contrived, however, to keep company with my fish, still doubtful of the result, till I came to the bottom of the long cast in question, when he still showed fight, and sought the shallows below. Unhappily the alders prevented my following by land, and I was compelled to take water again, which slackened my speed. But the stream soon expanding, and the current diminishing, my fish likewise travelled more slowly ; so I gave a few sobs and recovered my wind a little, gathered up my line, and tried to bring him to terms. But he derided my efforts, and dashed off for another burst, triumphant. Not far below lay the rapids of the *Saughter-*

*ford* : he would soon gain them at the pace he was going, that was certain ; see, he is there already ! But I back out again on dry land, nothing loth, and have a fair race with him. Sore work it is. I am a pretty fair runner, as has often been testified ; but his velocity is surprising. On, on—still on he goes, ploughing up the water like a steamer. “ Away with you, Charlie ! Quick, quick, man—quick for your life ! Loosen the boat at the Cauld Pool, where we shall soon be.” And so indeed we were, when I jumped into the said craft, still having good hold of my fish.

The Tweed is here broad and deep, and the salmon at length had become somewhat exhausted ; he still kept in the strength of the stream, however, with his nose seawards, and hung heavily. At last he comes near the surface of the water. See how he shakes his tail and digs downwards, seeking the deep profound—that he will never gain. His motions become more short and feeble ; he is evidently doomed, and his race well nigh finished. Drawn into the bare water, and not approving of the extended cleik, he makes another swift rush, and repeats this effort each time that he is towed to the shallows. At length he is cleiked in earnest, and hauled to shore : he proves one of the grey scull, newly run, and weighs somewhat about twenty pounds. The hook is not in his mouth, but in the outside of it ; in which case a fish being able to respire freely, always shows extraordinary vigour, and generally sets his head down the stream.

During the whole period of my experience in

angling, though I have had some sharp encounters, yet I never knew any sport equal to this. I am out of breath even now whenever I think of it. I will trouble any surveyor to measure the distance from the Kingswell Lees, the starting spot, above Melrose Bridge, to the end of the Cauld Pool, the death place, by Melrose Church, and to tell me how much less it is than a mile and three-quarters—I say I will trouble him to do so ; and let him be a lover of the angle, that he may rather increase than diminish the distance, as in good feeling and respect for the craft it behoves him to do. I will likewise thank my contemporaries and posterity to bear in mind that the distance about to be measured by this able surveyor was run at an eclipse pace, always allowing for some slight abatement in speed pending our immersion.

Whilst I was taking a rest on the greensward, the heated face of my excellent new friend appeared through the alders. He could not, however, be fairly said to be in at the death ; the *coup de grâce* having been already given about five minutes. He expressed the greatest astonishment at the swiftness and result of the race, and at the power of the fish, who had been able to distress two full-grown men so completely. He owned he was much excited, but thought fishing for salmon would be too turbulent an amusement for him ; though perhaps he might have kept up with a good pony, had the ground been passable by such a beast. Poussin, Virgil, the Apennines, all were forgotten ; and he began to enter warmly into the spirit of the present, and was

curious to know by what particular tactics one can contrive to get the better of such a large furious monster, as he expressed it, with such apparently inadequate means, when a small sea trout broke *him* with all the ease imaginable. As I now reckoned upon his attention, I told him, as follows—how to manage a large salmon, and how a large salmon may manage us :—

“ When you get hold of a *monstrum horrendum ingens* of a fish, say of some five and forty pounds, you must anticipate a very long and severe battle. If, therefore, you have a disposable Gilly with you, despatch him instantly for some skilful fisherman, as well to assist you when you are exhausted with fatigue, as to bring your dinner and supper ; not forgetting a dark lantern, that you may not be beaten by the shades of night—a circumstance by no means improbable. At the first onset you will probably be obliged to keep your arms and rod aloft, in order to steer clear of the rocks. This action, with a heavy rod and large fish on your line, is very distressing, if continued even for a short time ; and it will be necessary to repeat it often, if the channel is not very favourable ; and in that case your muscles will ache insupportably, if they at all resemble those of other men. The easiest position, when it is safe to use it, is to place the butt of your rod against the stomach as a rest, and to bring the upper part of the arm and the elbow in close contact with the sides, putting on at the same time an air of determination.

If your leviathan should be superlatively boisterous, no one knows what may happen. For instance,

should you be in a boat, and he should shoot away down the river, you must follow rapidly ; then, when he again turns upwards, what a clever fellow your fisherman must be, to stop a boat that has been going down a rapid stream at the rate of eight miles an hour, and bring it round all of a sudden in time to keep company with the fish, who has taken an upward direction ! And what a clever fellow a piscator must be, if he can prevent twenty yards of his line, or more, from hanging loose in the stream ! These sort of things will happen, and they are ticklish concerns. All I can do is to recommend caution and patience ; and the better to encourage you in the exercise of these virtues, I will recount what happened to Duncan Grant in days of yore.

“ First, you must understand that what is called ‘ preserving the river ’ was formerly unknown, and every one who chose to take a cast did so without let or hindrance.

“ In pursuance of this custom, in the month of July, some thirty years ago, one Duncan Grant, a shoemaker by profession, who was more addicted to fishing than to his craft, went up the way from the village of Aberlour, in the north, to take a cast in some of the pools above Elchies Water. He had no great choice of tackle, as may be conceived ; nothing, in fact, but what was useful, and scant supply of that.

“ Duncan tried one or two pools without success, till he arrived at a very deep and rapid stream, facetiously termed ‘ *the Mountebank* ’ : here he paused, as if meditating whether he should throw

his line or not. ‘She is very big,’ said he to himself, ‘but I’ll try her; if I grip him he’ll be worth the hauding.’ He then fished it, a step and a throw, about half way down, when a heavy splash proclaimed that he had raised him, though he missed the fly. Going back a few paces, he came over him again, and hooked him. The first tug verified to Duncan his prognostication, that if he was there ‘he would be worth the hauding’; but his tackle had thirty plies of hair next the fly, and he held fast, nothing daunted. Give and take went on with dubious advantage, the fish occasionally sulking. The thing at length became serious; and, after a succession of the same tactics, Duncan found himself at the Boat of Aberlour, seven hours after he had hooked his fish, the said fish fast under a stone, and himself completely tired. He had some thoughts of breaking his tackle and giving the thing up; but he finally hit upon an expedient to rest himself, and at the same time to guard against the surprise and consequence of a sudden movement of the fish.

“He laid himself down comfortably on the banks, the butt end of his rod in front; and most ingeniously drew out part of his line, which he held in his teeth. ‘If he tugs when I’m sleeping,’ said he, ‘I think I’ll find him noo’; and no doubt it is probable that he would. Accordingly, after a comfortable nap of three or four hours, Duncan was awoke by a most unceremonious tug at his jaws. In a moment he was on his feet, his rod well up, and the fish swatting down the stream. He followed as best he could, and was beginning to

think of the rock at Craigellachie, when he found to his great relief that he could ‘get a pull on him.’ He had now comparatively easy work ; and exactly twelve hours after hooking him, he cleicked him at the head of Lord Fife’s water : he weighed fifty-four pounds, Dutch, and had the tide lice upon him.”

Thus Duncan Grant has instructed us how to manage a large Salmon. Let us now see how a large Salmon may manage us.

In the year 1815, Robert Kerse hooked a clean Salmon of about forty pounds in the Makerstoun Water, the largest, he says, he ever encountered : sair work he had with him for some hours ; till at last Rob, to use his own expression, was “clean dune out.” He landed the fish, however, in the end, and laid him on the channel ; astonished, and rejoicing at his prodigious size, he called out to a man on the opposite bank of the river, who had been watching him for some time.

“Hey, mon, sic a fish !”

He then went for a stone to fell him with ; but as soon as his back was turned, the fish began to wamble towards the water, and Kerse turned, and jumped upon it ; over they both tumbled, and they, line, hook, and all went into the Tweed. The fish was too much for Rob, having broke the line, which got twisted round his leg, and made his escape, to his great disappointment and loss, for at the price clean salmon were then selling, he could have got five pounds for it.

Thus you see how a large fish may manage us.

I must tell you that the above-mentioned Robert

Kerse has long been a distinguished character on the Tweed. At a secluded spot, where the woods and rocks dip down to the margin of the river, and where its current is opposed by a rocky barrier through which it has worn its way in frightful gorges, the gaunt figure of auld Rob of the Troughs has been seen any time these forty years. He is very tall and bony, and when working his boat with the canting pole amongst the rapids, or looking down on the water from a jutting rock with his leister aloft ready to strike, he cuts a most formidable Salvator Rosa-like appearance. Rob is now highly seasoned with the saltiness of time, being nearer eighty than seventy years old ; drinks whiskey like water, his native element ; and to this day runs after the hounds, when they come near, like a boy of fifteen. He is a genuine lover of all sports, and has begot numerous sons and daughters : of the former four are game keepers, and fishermen on Tweed, Tiviot, and Ettrick, to the Duke of Buccleuch, Lord Lothian, and Lord Home. They are remarkable as claiming a regular descent from Saxon ancestors in the most remote times, and are an active, athletic, clean-limbed race of men, keen of eye, and swift of foot, of good pluck, and altogether amphibious, loving the heather and mountain flood better than the street and servants' hall. Stalwart men would they have been in a Border Foray had they lived in the time of Johnny Armstrong. Such and so great are the Kerses ; but they will not go down to posterity like the Purdies, "carent quia Vate sacro" : neither could the old river god Rob

himself contend with the otter so valiantly as Charlie Purdie. Whether it was that he had a sort of fellow-feeling for an animal that was amphibious like himself, and followed the same profession, or from what other cause I cannot say, but Rob did not particularly shine in a fair stand-up otter fight, as you shall hear.

In the latter end of September, 1839, Kerse had set a cairn net at the Clippers, "a little below Makerstoun House, but on the bank of the river opposite to it ; and on going to the cairn to examine the net, he saw a young otter sitting on, and entangled in it ; he threw more of the net over it, whilst drawing it to the land, and when he had caught hold of the tail, and was carrying it off, a large otter, which he described "as a she ane," five feet in length, jumped out of the water, ran up the bank after him, to use his own words, "like a mad bear," and commenced a furious attack upon him. Rob had nothing to defend himself with but his hat ; and as he was holding the young one with one hand, he found he was likely to have the worst of it, and to be bitten by the one animal or the other. So he threw the whelp to the old one, saying, "Aye, ye she devil, he may get her, twae to ane is odds." They both swam away ; that is, the two otters, not Kerse.

On looking after them he saw two other young ones trying to make past the point of the cairn, which, owing to the strength of the current, they seemed unable to effect : Kerse thought he would try the thing again, so he laid hold of one of them,

and pulled it out also by the tail ; scarce had he done this, and had begun to take to his heels, ere out again jumped the old one, and attacked him ; but this time Rob had provided himself with a large stone, and hit the old beast on the back, when he again set off, and carried the young one with him, which was afterwards given to Lord John Scott. During the whole contest, says Rob, “ the auld beast keepit squeeling, and makin’ a noise something like a horse, when he gies a snore.”

How Charles Purdie contended with an otter, will be seen hereafter.

## CHAPTER VIII

"Of Scotland well, the friers of Faill,  
The limmery lang hes lastit ;  
The monks of Melros' made gude kaill  
On Fridays when they fastit."

*Spec. Godly Songs*, page 87.

**I**N rambling by Tweedside one never loses sight of the Eildon hills within many miles of Melrose, which, together with the river and abbey, are the dominant features of the country.

Of the legend touching them there are two versions ; the poetical one given us in "the Lay of the Last Minstrel,"

" And, warrior, I could say to thee  
The words that clove Eildon hills in three,"

comes, as all the world knows, from a very high authority ; and, besides being extremely probable in itself, has good classical conformity to the magician in Ariosto, who produced marvellous visions in the air, which astounded the beholder ; but he having a glass given him by a more powerful enchanter, which enabled him to see things in their true semblance, saw only the magician sitting on a cloud, reading his book ; thus in both these cases wonderful things were done by cabalistical words, which art is called *Glamour*.

Now as to the Eildons, I do not exactly see what motive the wizard could have in cleaving them in three ; I therefore rather lean to the story, which is still current in the country, especially as it is very circumstantial, and most agreeable to sober reason. It runs as follows :—

Old Michael Scott the wizard, whose fame as a powerful magician had spread over most part of Europe\* (the same alluded to as having cleft the Eildon hills in three), was at continual feud with the holy monks of Old Melrose, and constantly playing his cantrips on them : they on their part were assiduous in using exorcisms, and such means as put Michael Scott's power in some danger ; so the wizard resolved that they should not have the light of the sun during vespers, but that they should either abstain from them altogether, or be put to the expense of oil or candles.

To effect his purpose he summoned a spirit or imp, or something very like a real devil, who was subject to his bidding, and for whom he was obliged to find constant employment.

Him he commanded to place a mountain to the west of the monastery, so as to intercept from it the rays of the setting sun. The imp being ingenious, and strong withal, looked around him, and found his affair in the Cheviot hills. Thither he hied, and with an iron shovel, he took away from them at one scoop a quantity sufficient to form one of the hills, which he deposited where he was commanded, and

\* “ Quel’ altro Michele Scoto fu, chi veramente  
Delle magiche Frodi seppe il Gioco.”—DANTE.

in two more journeys formed the other two hills, just as we see them now, only that they were bare of verdure. In his passage a part fell out of the shovel, which is now called Ruberslaw, which slovenly slip accounts for the inequality in point of size of the Eildons. At this slip Michael was exceeding wrath, and pursued his imp towards Tweedside to punish him. The imp had a good start, and Michael lay rather out of his ground: when the evil spirit came to old Melrose, he saw a brave company of monks in the haugh, who had made a *kettle of fish*,\* and were carousing with goodly flagons of ale. It is said Thomas the Rhymer of Ercildoune was with them, and that the prior, who threw a long line, had been very successful with it that morning, having had good sport in the Gate-heugh streams, and caught two clean fish in the Holy-wheel, now called the Hally-wheel, a stream which he himself tabooed upon the same principle that the Italians write “Rispetto” on the walls, namely, to keep off intruders.

At the sight of so many pious men, the little imp skulked behind a tree, and Michael himself was taken aback, and ran cunning, making a cross cut over the peninsula, in order to come in upon the imp below; the latter being hardly pressed, made for the river, well knowing that his task-master was not only a bad boatman, but that no enchantment could subsist in a running stream. Arrived there he

\* It is still a custom to make parties and dress the salmon on the spot immediately after their capture, which is called *having a kettle of fish*.



*Chas. Lummis, del.*

A PRETTY KETTLE OF FISH!



formed the scoop of his shovel into an iron boat, in which he sat and launched himself, using the handle as a rudder, round which he twisted his tail that he might steer with the greater nicety—*tali auxilio*—Michael, forgetting, in the heat of his wrath, his impotence of enchantment in a river, got into a fisherman's boat above Dryburgh, and gave chase. Now this boat being more buoyant than the imp's iron one, he gained fast upon him, and just got hold of his tail in a long reach above Mertoun, called ever after from that event “the *Doup Roads*.” As to whether the said usual appendage to a devil was greased or not, tradition has left us in ignorance; but it eluded the grip, and the imp shot down a cauld, through so rapid a gorge, that the warlock hesitated to follow.

And now a new scene presented itself; a third boat came sweeping under the scaurs in their rear, and joined the chase, its crew consisting of Thomas the Rhymer, and two zealous fathers, who pursued the wizard with bell, book, and candle; and they would have run into him a little below Craigover, but that he shot ashore; and then being on dry land, threw up by his art a bay behind him to obstruct their passage, and thus jocky\* them; but Thomas of Ercildoune, who was also a powerful magician, opened a passage on the south side of the river, and the monks only received a slight check. In the meantime Michael launched again; but the devil beat them all hollow at Little-Dean stream,

\* This spot still goes by the name of Jocky Bay, and is a good salmon cast.

which, being swift, rocky, and shallow, suited his style of navigation admirably. Now there was, and still is, a witch dwelling on the craigs near Makerstoun, at the *Corbie's Nest*, who, by a deception in magic called *glamour*, assumes the semblance of a crow. She was a sort of ally of Michael Scott, and flew forth, croaking her hoarsest and best upon the occasion. How far her power extended, and what she did, I have never heard; but certain it is that the wizard landed, that his magic might have effect, and, with or without her assistance, endeavoured to "bridle the Tweed with a curb of stone"; but his left foot insensibly touching the running stream, the work was imperfect and disunited, so that the whole volume of the river gushed through the rocks in gorges with such appalling violence, that neither he of Ercildoune nor the Frati thought it prudent to follow.\*

Michael now, seeing the pursuit after his familiar was vain on the water, remained ashore, and summoned another spirit, who was subservient to him, in the shape of a coal-black horse, and springing on him, said, as was his custom, "Mount, Diabolus, and fly"; but he was scarcely firm in his seat, before the little devil got down to sea, where he sunk his boat, and vanished to the bad place from whence he came. There is still a dangerous sandbank over the spot where this curious iron boat is

\* These rocks are called the troughs, or in Scotch, trows, and are under the beautiful grounds of Makerstoun. A very active gentleman, who resides a few miles higher up the river, has in very low water leaped from rock to rock, and thus crossed the Tweed without wetting his feet.

deposited ; and, as the mode of dissipating shoals and blowing up sunken vessels is now well known, I trust some effort will be made, either by government or a joint-stock company, to recover this valuable curiosity.

Thus terminated a race, singular for the skill that was displayed under embarrassing circumstances, and wonderful as to the persons and powers that were engaged in it.

" When next these *wights* go forth to *sail*,  
May I be there to see ! "

## CHAPTER IX

"Dinna let the Sherra' ken  
Donald Caird is come again."—SCOTT.

**I**F I were to write an account of half the poaching tricks that are common to all Salmon rivers, I should produce a book, the dimensions of which would terrify the public, even in this pen-compelling age.

In times when water bailiffs in Tweed had very small salaries, they themselves were by no means scrupulous about the observance of close time, but partook of the good things of the river in all seasons, lawful or unlawful. There is a man now, I believe, living at Selkirk, who in times of yore used certain little freedoms with the Tweed Act, which did not become the virtue of his office. As a water bailiff he was sworn to tell of all he saw ; and indeed, as he said, it could not be expected that he should tell of what he did not see.

When his dinner was served up during close time, his wife usually brought to the table in the first place a platter of potatoes and a napkin ; she then bound the latter over his eyes that nothing might offend his sight. This being done, the illegal salmon was brought in smoking hot, and he fell to, blindfolded as he was, like a conscientious water bailiff—if you know what that is ; nor was the napkin taken



**"Fisherman and Deer."**  
(From a drawing by E. Cooke.)



from his eyes till the fins and bones were removed from the room, and every visible evidence of a salmon having been there had completely vanished : thus he saw no illegal act committed, and went to give in his annual report at Cornhill with his idea of a clear conscience. This was going too near the wind, or rather the water ; but what would you have ?—the man was literal, and a great eater of Salmon from his youth.

People who are not water bailiffs have not always so delicate a conscience. Let us examine the style and bearing of such marauders as have fallen under our notice.

In the first place, there is your man with a pout net, which resembles a landing net, only that it is very considerably larger, and is in shape only half of a circle ; with this he scoops out foul salmon during floods, when, from weakness, they are unable to stem the current, and get close under the banks. This he transacts very snugly, under pretence of taking trouts ; so indeed he does, and welcome too, if he would stop there ; but this he is perfectly averse from.

Next in consequence comes your Triton, who walks the waters with a long implement in his hands, namely a leister, alias a waster ; with this weapon, “*quocunque nomine gaudet*,” the said deity, quick of eye and ready of hand, forks out the poor fish that are spawning on the streams ; and this in close time. Vile, vile Triton !

Then comes your lawless band of black fishers, so called from their masks of black crape with

which they disguise themselves : these men come forth in the darkness of the night to burn for salmon. When the winds are hushed, you may sometimes hear the dipping of oars and the clanking of a boat chain, and see at a distance a small light, like a glow-worm. In a little while the light blazes forth, and up rise a set of Othellos who are about to take a private benefit. These minions of the night are generally men of a desperate character, and it is not easy to collect water bailiffs sufficient in number or willing to encounter them ; but if water bailiffs would fight, how very picturesque the attack would be ! The rapids—the blazing—the leisters—the combatants driven headlong into the river. Why, the battle of Constantine and Maxentius, and the affair of the bridge, as seen in the famous fresco, would be nothing to it. The only thing I should apprehend would be, that the bailiffs would eventually sport Marc Antony and run.

In contradistinction to these illuminati comes your plausible poacher, a sort of river sneak. This man sallies forth with apparent innocence of purpose ; he switches the water with a trout-rod, and ambulates the shore with a small basket at his back, indicative of humble pretensions ; but has a pocket in his jacket that extends the whole breadth of the skirts. He is troutng, forsooth ; but ever and anon, as he comes to a salmon-cast, he changes his fly, and has a go at the nobler animal. If he hooks a salmon, he looks on each side with the tail of his eye to guard against a surprise ; and if he sees any danger of discovery from the advance of the foeman,

he breaks his line, leaves the fly in the fish's mouth, and substitutes a trout one ;—said fish swims away, and does not appear in evidence.

I once came upon one of these innocents, who had hold of a salmon with his trout-rod in a cast a little above Melrose bridge, called "*the Quarry Stream.*" He did not see me, for I was in the copse-wood on the summit of the bank immediately behind him. I could have pounced upon him at once, I and my fisherman. Did I do so ? I tell you, no. He would have broken his line as above, and have lost the fish ; and I wanted a salmon, for it is a delicate animal, and was particularly scarce at that time.

So I desired Charlie to lie down amongst the bushes, and not to stir till the fish was fairly landed, and was in the capacious pocket, which has already been described. Then I counselled him to give chase, and harrie the possessor. Judging, however, that if the man crossed the river at the ford a little below, which he was very likely to do, that he would have so much law of Charlie before he could descend the steep brae, that he might escape : I drew back cautiously, got into the road out of sight, and passed over Melrose bridge, taking care to bend my body so as to keep it out of sight behind the parapet ; I then lay concealed amongst the firs in the opposite bank. Thus we had Master Sneak between us. I was at some distance from the scene of action to be sure, and somewhat in the rear, as I could advance no further under cover ; but I had the upper ground, and was tolerably swift of foot

in those days, which gave me confidence. I took out my pocket glass, and eyed my man. He was no novice : but worked his fish with great skill. At length he drew him on the shore, and gave him a settler with a rap of a stone on the back of his head ; he then, honest man, pried around him with great circumspection, and seeing no one, he took the salmon by the tail, and, full of internal contentment, deposited it in his well-contrived pocket : he then waded across to the south side of the river, with an intention, as it seemed, of revisiting his household gods and having a broil.

Charlie now arose from his lair, and scrambled down the steep. The alarm was given, but he of the salmon had a good start, with the river between him and his pursuer. So he stopped for a moment on the haugh to make out what was going forward on all sides, much after the fashion of an old hare, who runs a certain distance when she apprehends any thing personal, then rests for a moment or two, and shifts her ears in order to collect the news from all quarters of the compass. Even so did our friend, and having satisfied himself that he was a favoured object of attraction, he was coy and took to flight incontinently ; I now sprang up from the firs, the game being fairly afoot, and kept the upper ground. The pursuit became close and hot, but as the fugitive, like Johnny Gilpin, carried weight, I soon closed with him.

“ You seem in a hurry, my good friend ; your business must be pressing. What makes you run so ? ”

" Did ye no see that bogle there by the quarry stream, that garred me rin this gait, haud on for yer lives, sirs, for if he overtakes us, we are deid men."

" Why the truth is, Sandy, that I do not choose to haud on at present, because I came forth in quest of a bonny salmon, and cannot go home without one ; could you not help me to such a thing ? "

At this Sandy took a pinch of snuff from his mull, and seeing my eyes fixed upon the length and protuberance of his pocket, answered quaintly enough—

" Aye, that can I, and right glad am I to do ye a favour, ye shall no want for a salmon whilst I have one."

So saying, he pulled forth a ten pounder, which occupied all the lower regions of his jacket. " How the beast got here," said he, as he extracted him gradually, " I dinna ken, but I am thinking that he must have louped intill my pocket, as I war wading the river."

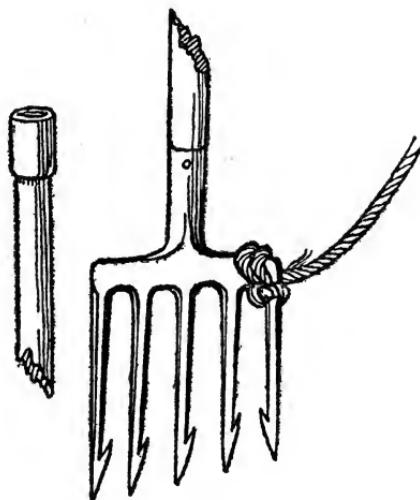
" Nothing more likely, and I will admit him to have done so for once, but, mark me, I will not admit of any salmon doing so in future without my permission in writing. You have been troutting, it seems, pray what sort of a fly do you use ? "

" Whiles I use a wee ane, and whiles a muckle flie, ane for rough and deep water, and the ither for shallow streams. That is the way to trout, both in loch and river."

" True ! I see you have some bonny little flies in your hat ; take it off carefully, Purdie—you understand me—and let me admire them."

Charlie advances, and taking off the man's hat with great care so as to keep the crown undermost, he pulls out from the inside six well tied salmon flies of the most approved colours, which he transferred to his own pocket. I actually saw "*Meg with the muckle mouth*" amongst them.

"Aye, ye are as welcome to the flees as ye are to the sawmont, and I am proud to do ye a good turn at ony gait."



"Well now, bear in mind, that I will never permit you to throw a fly wee or muckle in the Pavilion water again ; and if you darken the shores with your presence a second time, I will have you up at Melrose."

"I'm thinking I shall tak' your advice, for ye seem a sensible chiel. Will ye accept of a pinch of snuff ? "

"Good morning, good morning, get home to Selkirk as quick as ye can, we know ye well for a

souter of that town. Run, run, the bogle is after you ! ”

“ Run, aye that will I, and the deil tak' the hindmost,” said he, and off he went at his best pace ; leaving this blessing and the salmon to solace us.

Perhaps I shall best give a general idea of what was going on formerly in close time by a recitation of the confessions of my departed friend, Thomas Purdie ; and let it be borne in mind in his behalf, that at the time of his cantrips salmon were not valuable, and, consequently, little cared for, so no great harm was done ; but it is clear from his own showing that Tom in his early days was a sort of *Donald Caird*, for he had no right to be “ bleezing up,” where he did.

For the better understanding of his narrative, I shall give a description of the clodding, or throwing leister, or waster, as he was used to term it, the instrument with which he performed his sleights. It differs materially from the one in common use ; a description of which latter will be given hereafter.

This throwing leister is used chiefly on the upper parts of the Tweed, and its tributary streams, where the water is not deep. The spear has five prongs of unequal, but regularly graduated, length. Those which are nearest the fisherman, and which come to the ground first in throwing being the shortest. The entire iron frame of the spear is double the weight of that in common use. An iron hoop is bound round the top of the pole, as a counter-

balancing weight ; and the pole itself has a slight curve, the convex part being the outermost in throwing : a rope made of goat's hair, called " the lyams," is fastened to the top bar of the spear just above the shortest prong ; this rope is about twelve yards long, and is tied to the arm of the thrower. The spear is cast like a javelin ; and, if thrown by a skilful hand, the top of the shaft, after it has pierced the fish, falls beyond the vertical point towards the opposite bank of the river ; then the fish is pulled to land by means of the aforesaid rope or lyams, so that there is little chance of his escaping in his struggles for freedom.

The accompanying engraving represents the iron of the clodding waster ; that in general use will be given hereafter.

Now for Tom Purdie. I should miss the nice points of his character were I to deprive him of his own peculiar way of communicating his feats, though it is but too true, that when he got upon a favourite subject, he was most inhumanly elastic.

#### TOM PURDIE'S MUCKLE FISH

" While I was with Mr. Anderson, and shepherd at West Bold, one Sunday," says Tom, " I did na go up to Traquair to the kirk, but took a walk by the river side ; there were a vast o' fish in the water, and I saw ane or twae great roeners turning, a sure sign there were mickle kippers too. I had dandered down to near the burn fit, and had a pair of good stilts aye lying there. My first wife was then a lass, and lived at Caberston ; and the stilts were ready to

cross the water at an orra time. I took a thought that I would like to see what was steering on Caberton throat ; and sae I lap on the stilts and went through at the rack ; and when I was on the other side, I thought I might as weel tak a keek at the *throat*. I keepit weel off the water-side, until I was down aneth where the fish began to work. I kend by a clour in the water a gay bit afore me, that there was a big redd there, and drew cannily forrit. 'Odd, sir ! my verra heart lap to my mouth when I gat the glisk o' something mair like a red stirk than ought else muve off the redd, and hallans down the water and make for the south side. I fand my hair creep on my head. I minded it was the Sabbath, and I should not hae been there. It might be a delusion o' the enemy, if it was na the deil himsel'. I stude and consider'd. I had never seen the deil i' daylight, and forbye there was just then a great brown rowaner slade off the redd after him. If it was the deil, what could he be doin' wi' the rowaner ? The water was breast deep at the least ; it might be a fish after a', and I had heard the auld folk speak o' vera muckle anes. I lookit up the brae to the toon. Peggy aiblins hadn'a likit my hankering about the throat *on sic a day*, and she had slippit in to the house, and didna come out again. Sae when I saw it was sae, I held up the water side for my stilts, keepin', for aw that, an ee to the redds. Heaven forgie me ! I neuer saw sic a water o' fish ! If it was na the deil I had seen, I was sure he was na far off. I saw enough to temp a better man than me ; and I began to think I had better be at hame read-

ing a chapter o' the gude book, if no a leaf or twae o' 'the Fourfold State'; sae I took the stilts and came through again by the rack, and wan hame just a wee thought afore the master and the mistress, honest woman! came hame thrae the kirk. I haflins wist I had been there too;—but yet I was only lookin' at the warks o' the creation, and couldna say I had done ony great wrang; an' if I hadna seen Peggy come out o' the byre at Caberston, I ablins hadna stillit the water after a'. But I fand I could na read a styme; for, do as I might, I could na get the appearance that I had seen out o' my mind; and yet whan I consider'd about *the mickle rowaner*, that I was sure eneugh was a yeithly thing, I could na help believing that it was, after a', a fish I had seen; but I never saw sic another.

" Weel, a' the time the master was at the readin', I could na keep the glisk o' the awsome mickle fish out o' my head, and whan we raise thrae the prayers, I popit the shouther o' the nowtherd callant, and said quietly, ' Sandy, if I raise ye about twal o'clock ye needna wonder; sleep as fast as ye can till than, and tak' nae notice to Jamie when ye rise.' I had aft ta'en this lad wi' me afore to haud the light; for he was a stout loon o' his age, and could haud a light weel enough; having a natural cast rather bye common for a kin-kind o' mischief and ploys, and, I believe, was sound asleep in five minutes.

" As for mysel', I need hardly say I never steekit an e'e. I kend fu' weel that if we war na at Queedsie by the first o' the Monanday morning, the

hempies out o' twae or three o' the touns o' the north side o' the water wad be bleezin' up afore us ; and some *devilrie* came o'er the cock that sat on the Byre balks aside us, for he never mist to skirl every ten minutes thrae the time I lay doon ; sae I was as often grapin the hands o' my watch, which I had gotten in a coup thrae Geordie Matheson three weeks afore.

" At last, whan I had a gude guess it was drawing near to twal o'clock, and nae fear o' breaking the Sabath, I gat up and shook Sandy by the shouther, who was out o' bed in a giffy. We went to the barn, and tyed up twae prime heather lights, thrae a bunch or twae, which I had gae'd the miller lad dry on the killn ten days afore. They may talk o' *ruffies* and birk bark baith ; but gie me a good heather light, weel dried on the killn, for a throat o' the Queed. However, I got the lights on my back, Sandie carried a weel dried *bairdie*, and I took in my hand my clodding waster. I had gi'en the Runchies o' Yarrowford seven white shillings for her ; but nane could make a waster wi' the Runcches,\* nor track an *otter* either ; they had clean the best terriers in the hale country side ; and they had an art o' their ain in tempering the taes o' a waster that they took to the grave wi'

\* The Runcches (Runcimans) of Yarrowford were two celebrated smiths, probably brought to Selkirkshire by Murray of Philliphaugh. They were famous for a peculiar art in tempering edge tools. Their otter hounds and terriers also were capital. Singular stories were told of their sagacity. Rob Runchy, as a forlorn hope, once threw his clodding leister at a drowning man floating down the Yarrow in a high flood, and hauled him out with the lyams unharmed.

them. I could hae thrawn mine off the head of a scaur ; and if she had stracken a whinstane rock she wad hae been nae mare blunted than gif I had thrawn her on a haystack.

" On our way to the water, I was nae little fashed wi' the unsonsie callant blowing up the bairdie every now and than, to mak sure that it was na out, and I had ance or twice to shake him by the neck ; for I was na sure that the Gabberston folk, who were aye devilash yaap when there war mony fish in the water, might na be lying at the side o' the throat ready to blaw up when it past twal o'clock ; and gude truly, if they had gotten a blink o' our bairdie, they wad hae ta'en that instead o' the hour. At any rate there was little use in warning aw the north side o' the water that Tam Purdie was ga'n out to the fishing ; and, to tell the truth, the Sabbath day was little mair than o'er.

" But some had clippit the wings o' the Sabath closer than us after a' ; I saw the twinkle of a coal every now and than commin down Caberston peat-road ; and I weel kend it was just the Sandersons o' Priesthope bent for the same place wi' oursels. It was ill bein' afore them on a Monanday morning wi' fair play, when the water was in good trim. Faith I lost nae time when I saw the twinkle o' their peat-coal (there was nae strae for bairdies at Priesthope) in tying the lights on the callant's back and thrrawing him and the clod-waster on my shouther and stilting the water as I had done in the daylight. I kent fu' weel the place where the big redd was, and blew up about thirty step below,

sae that the light might be at the best when we came fornent it. Sandy held the light weel ; his eyn were glenting in his head wi' eagerness ; and just when we cam to the tail o' the redd, I saw the muckle kipper lyin' like a flain wedder. I had, as I thought, the advantage on my side, for the brae was three or four feet aboon the water, and I strack him wi' a' my pith. Whither the mid grain had stracken him on the back fin, I took nae time then to consider ; but the fourteen pund waster stottit off his back as if he had been a bag o' wool.

"A cauld sweet cäm' owre me, an' I believe every hair on my body crap. I was dead sure it was the *deil himself'* that had been permitted to throw himsel' in my way for breaking the Sabbath ! For I had begun to tye up the lights as soon as I shook up the callant ; an' it was hardly twal o'clock. I pu'd the burnin' light out o' his hand, and dash'd it in the Queed, threw him on my back as fast as I could, an' was hardly able to stilt the water again for vera dread.

"I needna' say we were soon in our beds ; and I took the callant in aside me, for he was to the full as feard, poor fellow, as I was—an' mair. For when I got time, an' turn'd calm eneugh to consider, I began to see it could na weel be *auld clutie*, for I could mind o' seein' the verra een, an' gib an' teeth and the gapin' mouth o' the kipper. And by and by, I cam' to be certain sure it was neither mair nor less than the big monster I had seen i' daylight. Sae wi' that settlement there cam' the question ; how could I get another chance ? a weel, I lay still

till just afore skye-break, which I kend baith by my watch, and the cock that had been through the night as quiet as the kye aneath him. I waken'd Sandie wi' muckle ado this time, and he had nae grit broo' o' the business : but, however, be that as it may, we tyed up another light an' set off again. But there was still a hankering i' the callant's mind anent ga'an back to the same place, where he had gotten sic a fleg. He was like a colt that has been scar'd wi' a gray stane, an's no willing to venture back to see that its nae bogle. 'But is ye *sure*, Tam, it was na the deil ?' 'Deil a bit o' Satan it was Sandie, ma man,' says I, 'for I saw him afore you ; an' the deil dare na show himsel' in daylight on sic a day.' Weel, we gat through the Queed again, an' kindled up the auld place. When we cam' up to the muckle redd, the fiend a haed was there but twae or three rowangatherers whidden about ; sae we cam' up the water-side for the light was only at the best, when, gonshens ! there was the great brute o' a kipper, that, when he had gotten a glint o' the light had minded the dunt he got on the back, an' was glidin' up the side o' the water within three step o' the channel. I scraucht to Sandie to haud up the light, and keepin' clear o' the back fin this time, I strack him atween the back fin an' the gills, at the same time shakin' the lyams off my arm. Peace be here ! if he didna stem the throat four feet deep wi' the waster sticking straight up in his back as if he never fand it, wi' the lyams about him ! I durst na draw however. I had nae fear o' their breaking, for they were spun of the

hair o' the grey auld buck that gaed for mony years  
on the Plora craig ;\* but had I pu'd at the lyams,  
the kipper behooved to turn, an' he might ha' taen  
down the throat tap water, an' I wad ha' lost my  
waster an' lyams, or pu'd it out o' his back. That  
I had nae mind to do.

" I never was feard for drownin' in my life ; at  
ony rate never in the Queed. I strack into the water  
breast deep, an' wonder sin syne how I keepit my  
feet ; but I had on a pair o' gude clouted shoon.  
The kipper tired o' the trade o' gaun against the  
strength o' the throat, an' tralin' the lyams, turned  
down the deep side of the water 'atween me an' the  
brae. I got haud o' the shaft o' the waster, but to  
try to grund him was needless, sae I keepit down the  
shank, an' that made the force o' the water raise the  
fish to the tap, an' I push'd him to the side, following  
as I best could, an' pressed him to the brae, when I  
lifted him out. Wi' the help o' Sandie (who had,  
when he saw the blood, gotten rid o' his fear o' the  
deil), I carried him to the head o' the rack, and  
when I got him on my back, my certie I was a massy  
man ! I was aye vexed I didna' weigh him, but my  
belief was he was forty gude pounds, Dutch weight.  
As I waded the water wi' him, leadin' Sandie by the  
hand, his neb was above my head, an' his tail plash'd  
in the water on my heels.

\* I know not the derivation of *lyams* ; the word is only used, as far as I know, to denote a small twisted rope usually made of goats' hair, for the sake of elasticity, and fastened to the bow of the clodding leister : it is coiled on the left arm at the other end in such a manner as to go freely off when the leister is thrown. Jamieson in his Dictionary derives the word from the French *lien*.

" My father was than miller o' Bold Milln, an' I took him down to be reisted in the kiln ; but we were a' sae thrang wi' talkin' about his size, that we forgot to lay him on the broads, and that, as I was sayin', vexes me to this day."

### GLOSSARY

*Clour*—a heaving up of the water.

*Hallans*—slanting.

*Thrae*—from.

*Haflins*—partly.

*Styme*—none at all, in the least.

*Popit*—tapped.

*Steekit*—closed.

*Hempies*—scamps—rogues.

*Balks*—cross beams.

*Skirl*—crow.

*Coup*—a swap.

*Ruffies*—old pieces of tarred sacking.

*Bairdie*—a straw rope to keep the light in.

*Yaap*—alert.

*Flain*—flayed.

*Broo*—liking.

*Rowangatherers*—meaning trout.

*Massy*—proud.

*Meal stone*—containing 16 pounds.

*Reisted*—dried.

*Broads*—scales.

*Lyams*—rope of horse-hair used with the throwing leister.

## CHAPTER X

“ And doun the stream, like Levin’s gleam,  
The fleggit salmond flew ;  
The ottar yaap his pray let drap,  
And to his hiddils drew.”

*Border Minstrelsy.*

WHILST the Pavilion\* was getting ready for my reception, I took up my quarters at an inn at Melrose, and, at my instigation, Mr. Tintern came there also, and thus we soon got intimate. The river had been falling in for some time, and was now too low for fly-fishing ; and as the sky had lately been pretty clear, and as the evening promised a calm and sunny day for the morrow, I promised to show him the manner in which we speared salmon by the light of the sun, should the weather prove as good as I anticipated.

My expectations for the time, at least, were fulfilled ; for on waking I found the whole expanse of heaven serene and glowing ; not a cloud to be seen, not a breath of air to ruffle the water ; so I sent to awaken my companion. Breakfast was prepared,

\* Having often mentioned the Pavilion Water, I should have explained before that it belongs to Lord Somerville ; and I have thus called it from the name of his house, which I rented for some years, and which is about two miles up the river from Melrose. The chief scene of my operations, however, was some miles lower down the river from Dryburgh, as far as Makerstoun.

but no Mr. Tintern. A little while after I heard a languid voice say, "Want some hot water." A quarter of an hour elapsed, when I heard the same words again ; after about a similar interval of time I heard, "Want a stocking" ; and then, after a long pause, "Want a stocking" again. I was out of all patience ; so I went up to entreat the man of wants to use more expedition, as we were losing a very fine morning.

I did not find him in his room, but sitting down half dressed on the upper stair near it, looking at his sketch-book. He had not shaved, as his hint for hot water, having been uttered in a mild tone, had not been taken. He did not so much care about shaving, he said, but he could not go out with only one stocking on, and he could not find the other, and unluckily he had sent his dirty ones to be washed. It certainly was true that one of his legs was bare ; and, after a fruitless hunt, we had nothing left for it but to send into the town and buy a fresh pair. After they arrived, however, he discovered that there was no particular necessity for such a step, as he had favoured one leg at the expense of the other, by putting *both* stockings on it.

I had already breakfasted, and my impatience increased ; so it was agreed that my friend should take our host's little pony, and join me above Melrose Bridge. When I got to the spot, Tom Purdie, who was usually very forward on these occasions, was not arrived ; but I descried Mr. Tintern at a distance, not upon the innkeeper's pony, but

walking down hill ; and I went to meet him that he might not miss us at the river. I came up to him precisely at the turnpike by Newton, and overheard the following little dialogue between him and the turnpike woman :—

“ Here’s twopence for you, good woman.”

“ What for do ye gie me this ? ”

“ Why, for my horse, to be sure.”

“ And whar may your horse be ? ”

“ Where ? why here, behind me, my good dame.”

“ It must be a gay piece ahint then, I’m thinking, for I canna see the beast.”

At this he began to pull the bridle rein which he had in his hand ; and, upon finding it very particularly obedient, he looked round and found, true enough, that the pony whom he fancied he had been leading down hill, and was at the end of the said bridle, had slipped out his head, and trotted back the way he came. At this incident, he seemed almost as much amused as we were ; though I thought I saw a lurking appearance of distress in his countenance, too, as having further to walk than he had bargained for.

Let us now see what the fishermen were doing. Charles Purdie and Thomas Jamieson, whilst sitting on a rock by the water-side, at length descried Tom Purdie making up to them with his leister.

“ Well, Tom,” said Jamieson, “ I never knew ye keep ahint afore, when there was any wark for the leister. What makes ye so late, mon ? ”

“ Why, I cudna get awa’ from Abbotsford ; there was a gentleman wi’ Sir Walter ; but wha he was I

dunna ken, but I think he was English. Sir Walter gaed out to tak a walk, and cried to me to follow him. When we war joost gaen up near to the turn before we cum to the Boor,\* *Pepper* and *Finnet* were hunting the woods, and Maida was gaen ahint us ; and, to my great astonishment, when I lukit a wee piece among the trees, DI, who was wi' me, war standing, and pit out her muckle tail like the handle of a cleik. Or ever I wishes, out gets a dirty beast of a hare, and bangs right on to the walk afore us. Sir Walter and the other man war going side by side ; or ever I kent, *Maida* pit his muckle nose past me, when *Pepper* barkit, and set up his great lugs ; and as the gentleman walked rather wide at the knee, he saw the hare through atween his legs, and made a great brush all at aince, and lifted him off his feet. The gentleman, thinking he was going to fa', cotched a firm grip o' Maida's rough hair as he sat strid legs on his back. Maida wanted to follow Pepper, and rin awa wi' him aboot thirty yards, when he coupit him off, and he fell owr the brae among the bushes on the under side o' the walk ; and Sir Walter gie a laugh ; and I cudna behave mysel ava, for I was nearly fawd doon wi' laughing too. Hey, mon, I never was so takken by the face in aw my life ; and when the gentleman got up, his breeks were riven at the knee ; and when he cam out from among the bushes, he lookit sae soor, that Sir Walter turned round and flate on me for laughing ; but if I was to dee for it, I cudna help it ; and Sir Walter turned his back to

\* A moss house or rustic seat.

the gentleman and laughed himsel, joost as bad as me ; but the gentleman never laughed a bit. Aweel, we turned to gang hame again, and a' the way doon the walk the gentleman he keepit looking at Maida, and when he got to Abbotsford, he ordered his carriage and gied awa."

" Well, that was better sport than we are likely to have to-day, Tom, for the cluds are beginning to rise, and the wind is getting up ; more's the pity, for it was the finest morning I ever saw, and now we are late, and have lost twae hours. But here comes the maister and the strange gentleman with him, he that does not know a fish from a cow, and who was broke by ane of thae whitlings."

The little party being now entirely assembled, agreed that, as the day was beginning to alter, it was a pity to disturb the water till they saw clearly how it would turn out ; so the fishermen remained with the boats and leisters at Craigover boat-hole ; and, in the meantime, I, Harry Otter, thought I could not do better than explain the operation of sunning to my friend, Mr. Tintern, as there was now some chance of gaining his attention ; so we sat down, and I commenced as follows :—

*Sunning*, as I have told you, is a mode of taking salmon with a spear by sun light ; and vast numbers are captured in this manner, particularly in the upper part of the Tweed, where fish are more easily seen than in the lower, from the comparative shallowness of the water in which they lie.

This sport does not begin till the river is quite low and clean, and useless for the fly. To succeed per-

fectly requires a bright and calm day. You cannot see a fish lying even at a very moderate depth when the surface of the water is ruffled by the wind. As soon as the river is thus fairly in order, take the first good day that occurs ; you may not have many more ; and if you have, you will not mend the matter by waiting too long, as after a continuance of hot weather a green vegetable substance rises from the bottom, which lessens the transparency of the water.

If you have a man sufficiently clever with the leister, let him stand in the water at the head of the stream whilst you are trying below, that he may strike the fish which endeavour to pass out of it into another cast. If you have no such man, and there are very few who can see a fish pass up a rapid gorge, you may hang a net in the stream ; but you must not bar the river by stretching it quite across, as that is illegal. If you sun a large pool where there is deep water, and various runs and eddies in it, it is advisable to place nets in such situations as are most favourable for fish to strike into when they are disturbed by the boats, and the other means in use for frightening them. The pass being thus in part secured and all prepared, the next thing is to rout about, and endeavour to frighten the fish by every means in your power, so that they may hide themselves under the rocks and stones, or even lay, as they sometimes do, half stupefied beside them, when you may strike them with the leister. To effect this, it is usual to begin by rowing your boat or boats over the pool with

some white object hanging in the water from the stern : the sculls of horses are in high repute for this service ; and I dare say a stuffed otter would be excellent, though I never tried it.

When you think you have created sufficient terror by these means, you may look about for the fish, and the sport begins. You may manage your boat with the leister, as in burning by night, of which hereafter : but you do not, as in that case, necessarily work her broadside in front ; and one artist is sufficient for the amusement, though more may partake of it. If the leisterer knows the water well, he puts the boat gently over the rocks and stones, where the fish endeavour to conceal themselves. Sometimes they get under a large stone and are entirely hidden ; generally they are partially concealed under smaller stones, part of the body and tail only being seen ; so that it requires some dexterity to strike them properly, or indeed at all. Some will lie under the shelf of a rock quite open to the view ; in which case you must be careful, when you strike, that a prong of the leister does not rest upon the ledge of a rock above, instead of on the salmon. Others I have seen lying fair and open in the bare channel ; but these will not lie to the leister so well as those in the situations I have mentioned. If you do not strike a fish near the centre of his body, you are never very sure of lifting him. The late Staffa, before he came to his title, was once sunning the Pavilion-water with John Lord Somerville, and perceiving that the fisherman in their boat had struck a salmon that was likely to

get off the spear when he might attempt to lift him ; in the true spirit of a Highlander, and without saying a word to any one, plunged at once into the Tweed with his clothes on, dived down to the fish, and brought him into the boat with his hands. "A Highlander can never pass a seal, a deer, or a salmon, without having a trial of skill with him."

To take a fish whose tail alone is seen projecting from the hiding place, provide yourself with a small steel harpoon, the barbs of which shut into the shaft when the point enters and makes the wound, but which spread laterally when you pull it back ; tie a line of small whip-cord to this weapon, and fix the butt of the harpoon itself in the point of a rude rod made for the purpose. You may then push it into the tail of the fish, when the little spear will come from the rod ; and you may pull out your salmon with the line attached to it.

There are some very large stones in the Tweed, sometimes two or three lying together, under which salmon can totally conceal themselves ; but you will easily discover if there are any underneath them by the air-bubbles which they cast up to the surface of the water when you poke with your leister shaft. My method of taking these fish was to throw a casting net over the stone or stones that concealed them, and then to poke them out with the pole of the leister. The net should be strong, or they will swim clean through it, as if it were a cobweb ; in throwing the net, you must cast above the hiding stone, allowing for the current, which will take it down some little distance before it sinks to the

bottom, according to the depth and strength of the water. Of course this method may also apply to fish *partially* concealed.

In sunning, as in burning, begin at the lower part of the river that belongs to you, so that you may again come across those fish that escape upwards, and may not go beyond your water ; and you will have a more successful day of it, if you wait till your neighbour below has sunned his water. If the river continues low for some time, disturbed fish will be continually coming forward, and you may go over your water two or three times at different periods, till you have caught nearly every fish that takes up his seat in it.

If a salmon gets off your leister wounded, being weak, you may be sure he will go down the river ; and the eels will come out instantly, if it be hot weather, and follow the blood : if the fish is badly wounded, although not dead, the said eels will soon settle the matter, and eat out his flesh, leaving the skin alone for speculators to make mermaids with.\* You will see the eels by dozens hanging thick on him like the sticks in a bundle of faggots ; but they are too small to be taken with a salmon spear, and do not resemble the fine silver eels in the Kennet and some of our English streams, but are browner in colour, and have large heads. The Scotch have a strong antipathy to them, and never use them

\* Some people will remember an exhibition of this sort many years ago in St. James's Street, in London. It was very ingeniously constructed, though far from alluring. It was placed under a glass, and created some sensation amongst the naturalists, as mermaids ought to do.

for food. But they should be removed from the river if possible, as they make great havoc in the spawning beds.

This information having been briefly given, Mr. Tintern went up the river with his fishing rod, as the sky was not yet clear enough for the main sport : after having absented himself for a considerable time, he returned to the party with a fish, which, being too large for his basket, he held with his hand-kerchief, a corner of which he had passed through the gills. This fish he lifted up before Tom Purdie, with an air of success that I never saw him assume before, saying, "Now, Mr. Purdie, I have conquered a sea trout at last, and here he is ! "

Tom was all aghast, for before the fish was laid on the ground he thought he saw what he called "a very nice new-swoomed gilse" ; but, upon a closer inspection, his practised eye soon described the difference ; for it was a real river trout, of above four pounds weight, and unusually bright in colour. Tom turned him over and viewed the other side, then turned him over again, and viewed both sides with great seeming interest ; he then examined his teeth and gills, and uttered a short groan ; pulling out his snuff-box from his pocket, and having solaced himself with a pinch, he took a still more minute survey, looking alternately at the fish and Mr. Tintern : at length, casting a reproachful glance at the animal, he said pithily, "Od, and to be taen by the like o' him ! "

The sky was now clear again, and the wind, which had only been brought on by a few rising



SUNNING AT CRAIGOVER

J.D. COOKE, A.D.L.



clouds, had subsided. Mr. Tintern, however, being too good-humoured to take Purdie's sarcasm to heart, was so charmed with his success that he would not join the leisterers, but preferred fishing with the fly ; at the same time he delicately hinted to me, that he thought there was something a little sanguinary in the use of such a weapon, though he owned that the invariable custom of knocking the fish on the head immediately they were lifted made their sufferings very short, and certainly, he thought, not exceeding those of sheep and other animals in the way they are commonly killed for the table.

He then seceded, and I promised to join him at Melrose. We went over the *Webbs*, and Craigover boat-hole, setting nets and using various devices to make the fish conceal themselves, in the way that has been mentioned above. Upon the whole, we were tolerably successful ; but having already described the process of sunning, and being of a compassionate disposition, I will trouble no one with a relation of the particulars of our transactions, especially as I mean to give a flaming description of what is called "burning the water," towards the end of these pages.

I went home from Mertoun by Melrose Abbey, to take Mr. Tintern along with me, according to agreement. As he was in the habit of fishing and sketching alternately, I surmised he would establish himself in the church-yard, and fall to work with his crayons : nor was I deceived ; for when I came to the wicket gate, I descried him very busy indeed ; whilst a corpulent little gentleman in a snuff-coloured coat,

with a cane in his hand, was looking over his shoulder. As I thought some amusing contrast of character would take place, I listened to what was going on ; in fact, the little man's gestures were so grotesque that I was willing to enjoy them as long as possible. He would stand still and look over the artist's paper with a scrutinising expression ; then he would draw back a little, and stamp his cane on the ground with all the force and dignity of a baillie. In the meantime our friend was so absorbed in his work that he seemed wholly unconscious of this person's presence, till he was aroused by the little man himself, who said, in a loud tone, and with an air of consummate consequence, stamping a tombstone at the same time with his staff of office—

“ Weel, friend, what may ye be doing here ? ”

*Tintern*, looking back over his shoulder, said, in his absent manner—“ I think he must have been buried at the eastern end of the Abbey ; am I right, my good sir ? ”

“ Aye, aye—I thought so—I ken weel eneuch what ye're after ; ye are ane o' thae chielts that gang aboot to raise the dead bodies o' the departed corpses ;—Od, that's a gude yane ! ”

*Tintern (still sketching, and speaking abstractedly)*, “ I'd give something to see old Michael Scott's tomb.”

“ Nae dout ye would ; but I'll tak' gude tent to hae a sure hand or twae to watch yer howking tricks the night.”

So saying, “ the little round fat oily man ” marched off with great dignity, muttering, “ Od,

that's a gude yane ! disturbing the dead bodies o' the corpses ! He shall gang afore the Sherra'."

It seems my unlucky friend was doomed to a continued interruption of his studies ; for no sooner had the man in office departed, than some old women came and stood over him for a very considerable time, and occasionally interrupted his view ; one of them at length said pithily to her companions, " Hech, sirs, this is idle wark ! let's awa to the praaties."

Such interruptions, though trivial in themselves, are sometimes a little troublesome to a studious man, and happy had it been for Mr. Tintern had he met with no other ; but in a short time afterwards the church-yard was full of all the idle boys in the town, who fairly hooted him, and compelled him to leave the place, which he did under the best protection I was able to afford him. He called them "naughty boys," and they shouted amain, " Corpse lifter ! corpse lifter !" having been previously so instructed, as may readily be guessed.

This disagreeable attack annoyed Mr. Tintern so seriously, that he resolved to leave Melrose the next day, which I was sincerely sorry for. I could not, however, change his resolution, as he seemed to think that he was a marked man, and that he should enjoy tranquillity no longer in that country.

I got up early the following morning to bid him farewell, and just in time to prevent his going into the Glasgow coach instead of the London mail. He seemed sorry to part with me ; and, as he was

getting into the carriage, he begged the mail-coach-man not to drive fast, or to whip his horses.

I felt a blank at his departure ; for he was a most agreeable and clever gentleman, and not the less entertaining for his eccentricities, which appeared only from time to time, and interfered with no one's humour.

#### TROLLING

In the Tweed, and indeed in some other rivers, they have a method of fishing which is called *Trolling* in Scotland, but *Cross Angling* in England, where it is practised with the natural May-fly for catching trout. In trolling for salmon, two men stand opposite to one another on either side of the stream, each with a rod in hand ; their lines are joined together, and from the bow which this junction creates about half-a-dozen flies are suspended vertically. Of course there can be no casting of the line ; but the flies are hung in the stream, and passed over it, the fishermen trailing them, and acting in concert ; thus, by means of the number of flies, and the saving of time by not having the line to throw, a great quantity of water is gone over in a short space of time. But this sweeping method has its drawbacks, and very serious ones they are. Out of the number of fish that offer, very few are taken ; many get only a touch of the hook, and escape, and are thus entirely lost to the proprietor of the part of the river where this occurs ; for, generally speaking, fish so alarmed quit the water the same night, and travel upwards. I remember a singular instance of this occurred to me in the Pavilion-water.

The river was very low and clear at the time ; so much so, that it was in good order for sunning, and therefore in no state for fish to travel in. I chanced, however, to hook a salmon with a fly, which, after being played a little, got off the hook : there was a cairn just above the spot where this occurred, and I told my fisherman to set the net belonging to it that night ; he did so with a very bad grace, assuring me that it was perfectly useless ; or, as he was pleased to express himself, " just perfect nonsense." Nevertheless the fish, having started from his stream, was caught in it that night.

John Crerar mentioned to me another instance where a salmon, having broken a fisherman's line, went down the Tay for a mile, and then up the Tummel three miles, and was there caught the day following by the same fisherman, who thus regained his fly with two or three fathoms of line attached to it.

On the other hand, I know of three well-attested instances of salmon having been caught almost immediately after they had broken the fisherman's line ; but I conclude these fish were touched at first in a part that was scarcely sensitive. A very curious circumstance of this sort occurred in Isle Isla, where a gentleman was broken by a salmon, which he caught immediately afterwards ; upon landing it, he found, to his amazement, that he had not touched the fish itself the second time, but that his hook was linked in the one left in his mouth previously. This was a very delicate affair ; for had not the pull upon the fish been moderate and

even, he must inevitably have escaped. As for my own practice, I never recollect having risen a fish a second time that had touched my hook previously.

What I have said regarding the number of fish lost or set down in trolling is so universally acknowledged, that this style of angling is seldom practised, except, indeed, in fishing for kelts in very full waters, when no one can throw completely over the casts without the use of a boat. In this state of the river the flies are drawn down the stream ; but when the water subsides, they are trailed up it. It is practised also a day or two before close time, when the loss of fish off the hook is immaterial, as far as regards future sport.

In the Tay, and some other large rivers, there is another method of fishing with a fly in full water, which is called *Harling*. Two rods are laid in the bottom of a boat, and hang over the stern, with a large fly attached to each line. The boatman then rows against the stream to the right and left of the river in a zigzag direction, but still letting the boat fall gradually down the river, so that he passes over no fish that have not previously seen the flies. The rower judges his pace by the objects on the banks. When fish rise they hook themselves. Those who practise this method are generally fishermen who have been working the previous night, and like it because they have not the fatigue of holding or throwing the rod. They fancy, also, that having two flies, they have a double advantage ; but this is a deception, because both flies follow each other in the same direction. Without much fear of con-



FLOORS, UPPER WATER.

Photo, Macgregor, Kelso.



ON BEMERSYDE.

Photo, Macgregor, Kelso.



tradiction, I pronounce this same harling to be a most prodigiously stupid method of proceeding, and little superior to setting night lines. I tried it once in the Tay, but no more harling for me. To do the Tweed folks justice, I never saw it practised there ; and I can only recommend it to those liberal persons who wish to drive the salmon from their own waters to those of their neighbours above.

What, alas ! becomes of the beautiful wielding of the rod, thrown (albeit heavy, and difficult to manage) with a grace and dexterity that indicates no exertion, the fly not falling like a four-and-twenty pounder, but just kissing the surface of the water, and moving to and fro in a manner so seducing as to beguile the most wary salmon of every atom of prudence !

#### FISHING WITH BAIT, MINNOW, AND PARR'S TAIL

When the water is too low for the fly, and quite clear, then begins the bait or worm fishing in Tweed. The tackle consists of a large hook at the end of your line, and a smaller one above it, placed like the lip-hook in minnow tackle. These are threaded with worms. The manner of putting them on will be better learnt from the fisherman on the river side, than it can be explained in writing. When the water is in right order, that is, low and clear, as I have said above, and the weather fresh, a clever fisherman may glean the river of almost all the fish that are left in the streams. Tolerably large shot being fixed towards the end of the line, and the worms themselves being heavy, it requires some

dexterity to throw a good distance without accidents. To obviate these, and to effect your purpose, begin with a line of a moderate length, and tuck out a few folds of the reel, holding them fast with your hand when you bring your rod back, but letting them go just as you have discharged your throw. Thus the line is short at first, but the weight of the shot and worms carry out the folds to the extent required. Having thus cast beyond the run of the salmon, let the stream carry round your bait easily, without any jerk on your part whatever, or any further motion than humouring it towards the shore. Contract the line as the bait comes near you, by gathering it up in folds with your left hand, and holding them fast against the rod with the fingers of your right, letting them go again at the proper time when you cast, in the manner I have before described. Thus you may throw a very long line without endangering its safety by coming in contact with the ground or any objects in your rear.

You may fish to any depth you please merely by elevating and lowering the point of your rod, according to the run of the water. When the weather and water are quite fit for the sport, the fish seizes the bait briskly, and returns with it to its seat or elsewhere : you must give him the line by pulling from the reel with your left hand, and letting it run smoothly between the fingers of your right. A check at this time may lose him ; but let him alone a few seconds, and he will have gorged the hook ; then strike and kill him as soon as you can : he is safe enough. Fresh open weather is the best for this

sport ; but fish will sometimes take well even in a frost.

Many excellent and credible fishermen have informed me that they have had good sport with the worm in northern rivers, and in those of Ireland, when the water was thick. Their testimony I do not doubt ; I only say fish are not caught with the worm, or bait, as it is called, when the water is in a foul state *in Tweed*. I remember a gentleman applying to me for leave to take a day's salmon fishing, which I granted. There had been rain the day before, and a spate came down in the morning. I thought this unlucky ; but he was of the contrary opinion, and rejoiced in the change ; "For," said he, "if I sit on the point of a cairn, I shall catch every travelling fish that passes with a worm, as I have often done in Ireland." This was a new light to Charles Purdie and myself. Worms were given him in abundance ; an excellent cairn selected for the sport ; and there my gentleman sat the livelong day without having an offer. Old Richard Wilson could have introduced him into the landscape with effect, for he was picturesque and well placed ; but as a fisherman, says Charlie, "he is useless a' thegither." However, the cairn is a laudable monument of his patience and perseverance.\*

\* Worm fishing still remains a useful alternative method both in low and high water, but it does not seem to be equally effective in all rivers. A better method, of which Scrope evidently knew nothing, is the use of a prawn or shrimp. The shrimp especially is a very good bait for low water, and it requires a good deal of skill in the using, especially if it be fished on a single hook more or less like a fly, which is the most artistic plan.—(ED.)

## FISHING WITH MINNOW AND PARR'S TAIL

Salmon do not take the minnow or the parr's tail so well in the Tweed as they do in the Tay, nor so well in the upper parts of Tweed as they do in the lower. The minnow, in low water, is preferable to the parr's tail ; and it should be worked in the same manner as in trout fishing, only not quite with so quick a motion. It is not necessary to use more than two hooks ; namely, the large hook that passes through the minnow, and the lip hook. Shot should be put on the casting line about a foot and a half from the bait—fewer or more according to the strength of the stream.

What is called the parr's tail is a pretty liberal allowance of the said little fish, consisting of a diagonal cut from the shoulder to the anal fin ; so that in fact you have all the firm part of the fish, discarding the head and the stomach. In full water I think this bait is preferable to the minnow ; and it has the advantage of a much firmer hold of the hook, not breaking like the soft parts of the minnow.

*Clean* salmon will take this bait whenever the river is in order for the fly, or perhaps a little before it is so, even when the water is slightly discoloured, or, as the fishermen call it, *drumly*. But foul fish, including kelts, never take it well in the upper parts of the Tweed, unless the water is clear, though they will take it in a drumly water in the Tay ; nor can any sport be expected with it in very warm weather.

The best state of the water, and the most convenient time, is between the fly and bait fishing ;

that is, when it is rather too low for the one, but not low enough for the other. The best weather is a fresh day, with wind to act upon the surface of the deep pools. In summer the proper hour is early in the morning. After a night's burning, salmon take the minnow, small parr, or parr's tail, particularly well in the streams.

The best way of casting the minnow is precisely that which I have indicated in my instructions for fishing with the worm.

As in a deer forest, however extensive, every burn, rock, glen, moss, and mountain has its distinct appellation, so that you can describe with the greatest accuracy where a hart has been slain, or any signal event has happened ; so in a salmon river, every stream and pool in which these delectable fish lie is called by a name that either distinguishes its character, or relates to some event or circumstance which tradition has not always preserved. Some casts are called after the names of persons who were drowned in them : there is one such, yclept " Meg's Hole," some little distance above the Melrose bridge. I wonder who Meg was ; but Charles Purdie, who is coming up the river, is right sure to tell me some nonsense or another anent it, so I will sound him.

" Well, Charlie, I see you have been putting all the boats in place, so sit down upon the bank here and rest yourself : pulling a boat up a strong stream is hard work, and pulling several over is harder. Now, tell me why the pool I fished the other day is called Meg's Hole ; but stick to truth, mind, and do not let me hear any of your foolish tales."

"Aweel, then, I'll tell ye the hale truth. Ye'll hae heard o' Thomas the Rymer, him that in days long gaen by lived at Erlston,\* and was taen awa' by the fairies, and is wi' them at this day ; we hae Sir Walter's word for it. Black Meg of Darnwick lived wi' this Thomas, who, ye ken, was an enchanter ; and Meg learned some awfu' words of him, and also power as a witch. Ae time she was seen sitting upon ane of the towers, aboon the Elfin glen, in the shape of a raven ; at anither, she came doon to the Tweed at the gloamin' in the likeness of a lang-craigied heron, flapping her muckle wings, and uttering driedfu' shrieks ; and again she was a cormorant, perched upon a blastit tree on the moor. I have seen her mysel' mair than ance."

"Seen her, man ! why you said she lived with Thomas the Rymer ; and it is some centuries since he was taken away by the fairies."

"Aweel, aweel, that may be ; but as sure as deid I aince saw her in her ain proper shape ; and she had a long neb, and a muckle mouth, and a red petticoat on, and she held a leister under her oxter, as if she war gaen to the burning ; and wha kens but she may live till this day ? for her deid body was never found, nor the corpse-light† seen. There are three towers on the muir a long way aboon the Elfin glen ; ye'll hae seen them yoursel' ; and Meg used to live in ane of these towers by turns : no one kent in which she was, and nobody cared to speer. At

\* Formerly Ercildoun.

† When a dead body was lost, it was supposed that a light appeared over it at night, to indicate its position,

nightfall she would come doon the glen to seek thae grey stanes\* that the fairies cast their cantrips with, and muckle scaith she wrought—rotting the sheep of ae body, and takkin the milk from the kye of anither ; so the lads waylaid her wi' flails, and pitchforks, and sic-like gear. They chased her aw the night in the glen, up and doon the braes and thickets, and through the water ; but they could never grip her, and they came back at skreigh o' day wi' torn plaids and broken shins, all covered wi' mire ; and some o' them had a sair sickness afterwards, and repentit that they ever middled wi' her."

" Oh, of course ; but what became of her at last, Charlie ? "

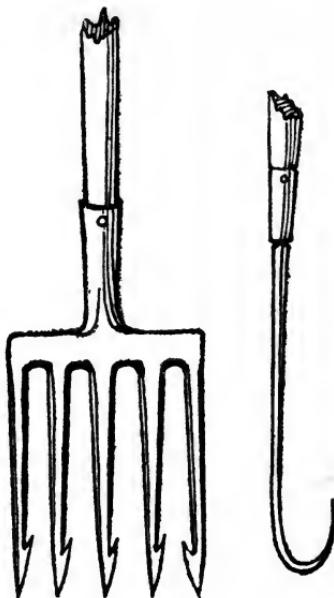
" Why, then, when she persistit in her foul ways, some o' thae freebooters, who feared neither witch, warlock, nor deil, made a raid into her country, and pit a fire round each of the towers†, and made the ane she was in too het to haud her, and out she ran wi' awfu' yells, skelping owre the moor, and so doon to the Elfin glen, where ane o' thoese same reivers, who had a flaming firebrand in his hond, wounded her ahint wi' it ; and the deidly nightshade still grows in the place where her blood was spilt. Then they drove her through the glen, and so doon the

\* These *fairy stones*, as they are called, are to be found in the Elfin glen, where the maid of Avenel is said to have appeared. This romantic spot belongs to Lord Somerville, and is in the ornamental grounds belonging to his house called the Pavilion. The stones are of a grey colour, and of various curious shapes, sometimes closely resembling articles in common use, such as tea cups, saucers, etc. ; they are supposed to contain some charm, and are constantly sought for to this day by all sorts of people.

† The three towers are still standing in the place indicated.

brae above a deep pool in Tweed, and pushed her in wi' a pole and a firebrand : so she cam to her end by wood, fire, and water.

"The pool was draggit in the mornin', but her body was never found ; and many people watched all night for a lang time, and the corpse-light never appeared ; nor was her wraith ever seen, except by



mysel' and my feyther at Trequair, and Walter of Darnwick, who saw it howking a grave wi' many ither wicked spirits round it on the tap of Eildon Hills.

"So the pool goes by the name of 'Meg's Hole' to this day ; and when ye howkit the muckle saw-mont that ran ye doon to the Cauld pool, ye ken that her spirit tried to drive him through the farther

arch of Melrose Bridge, but ye were owre canny for it."

The earliest method of taking fish, previous to the invention of either hooks or nets, was that used by the Egyptians, by means of a spear resembling a trident. A sculptured stone, excavated at Chester in 1738, and engraved in Lyson's history of the county as a Roman remain, represents a fisherman with his spear and basket.

I will now describe the salmon spear at present in use. It was formerly called *waster*; but that term is nearly out of use, except by the old fishermen, and it is now better known by the name of *leister*. It resembles a trident in its general appearance; but has five prongs, instead of three, made of very stout iron: there is only one barb to each prong, as two would tear the fish too much in extricating them. This weapon is fastened to the end of a pole more or less long, according to the depth of the water in which it is intended to be used; sixteen feet is the general length, and it is not easy to see or strike a fish at a greater depth; but in sunning I have sometimes tied a light rope to the top of the pole, and gone deeper than this with success, but then it was when the river was unusually clear. The opposite woodcut represents the cleik and the leister: the latter is rather narrower, and altogether of a neater make than those in general use.

In burning, the boat is managed with this leister; but no one can make use of it in this way who has not learnt to work it with a pole—which art is termed *canting*, and is, I believe, little understood

except in the Tweed : in the Tay and the Annan they know nothing of the matter. Now the pole is not used as in punting ; but the man who manages the boat, instead of shifting his place, stands up or sits down at the stern ; he keeps his eye upon her head, and forces her straight up the rapids, pressing the pole in the direction in which he would steer with a rudder. This is in a great measure effected with a twist of the body. If he does not keep her straight in her course, the current takes her at the side, whips her round in an instant, and down she goes, the deuce knows where, head foremost ; nor can you resume your position till you again bring her head up the stream.

In forcing your boat up very strong water, at every fresh thrust you must catch up the pole and put it in again very quickly ; for when you are not pushing the boat will recede if the rapids are heavy, and thus you may lose way. This, I think, can be done better by sitting than standing, as you are nearer your work. In this manner you may thrust your little craft where no oars could take hold of the water.

To perform this requires vast practice, and accordingly it was a considerable time before I mastered it completely, although I had been accustomed to punting on the Isis in my younger days. The rapids had it all their own way for months, or more. As you use the canting pole, which is shod with a heavy iron spike, so you must use the leister ; only with more caution, lest you should injure the prongs.

As a proof of the difficulty of this operation, I will

mention that I once put the canting pole into the hands of an English gentleman, who was a good rower, and, as he asserted, a good punter also. We were sunning a strong stream called the Carrywheel, and I had placed Charles Purdie at its gorge, to leister such fish as might attempt to pass up it from the fright given by the disturbance below. In a few seconds the head of the boat, not being held straight up the stream, went round like a shot, and so down the river. My friend was perfectly confused, and did not know what on earth should be done ; so, as we were losing way rapidly, I took the pole and brought her head up again. Still he would not give in, and was determined to have another trial. Well, he pushed here, and he pushed there, and with these strenuous efforts succeeded in describing pretty accurately in his course what in Gothic architecture is called the zigzag moulding, losing way, however, at every angle.

Not having taken any notice of the objects on the banks, he did not precisely know whereabouts he was ; but his exertions, simply as exertions, were highly laudable. When he had permitted the boat to fall down into easy water, he had some little command over her, and of this he was right proud. As time was precious, I resumed the command, and put the boat up again with my leister. When we came up to the fisherman, my novice said, with considerable exultation, "Charlie, did you see me cant ? "

" Houte, toute, mon, you canna cant ava ; she was aye ganging doon," was the uncourteous response.

Having described our method of managing the boat, I will endeavour to explain the manner in which we strike the salmon. The leister should not be held firm in the grasp, but sent loosely through the hands, as its own weight in falling will be more effective than any force you can give it with a thrust.\* You may think otherwise, perhaps. Well, then, take your own way ; hold the weapon firmly and determinedly ; you are going to do great things, you fancy. But what happens ? The water proves deeper than you had calculated upon, and, not touching the bottom with your spear as a support, in you go, your head taking the lead, and the rest of your members following the playful example.

Strike your fish over the shoulders if you can, and bring your boat in such a position as to make the stroke as vertical as possible. When you have fixed him, hold him to the ground a space ; then run your hands down the pole, making the distance between them and the fish as short as you conveniently can ; lift the animal with his head uppermost, by which means he will come out lighter, and such action as he may make with his tail will assist you rather than himself.

If you do not bear in mind this instruction, and

\* The *Droit* lately contained the following :—“ At the moment that an omnibus was passing on Friday through the Rue Montmartre, under a house, No. 63, that was undergoing repairs, a pole more than thirty feet in length slipped from the scaffolding at the fourth story, and fell perpendicularly on the omnibus, passed right through the body, and entered so deeply between the stones of the pavement that the horses were stopped on the moment, the vehicle being literally nailed to the ground ; by a providential chance none of the passengers were injured !!! ”

choose to have a go at a salmon at a little distance from you, as having a way of your own, I will tell you what will probably happen from this freak also. The stroke will drive back the boat, and you and the fish will part company. You may have struck him, perhaps—not impossible that ; but your intended victim twists off in a moment, and says as plainly as a salmon can speak, “ levrò l'incommodo.”

I should observe, that in burning the water by night there is no time to fix every fish to the ground, and that they are then most usually lifted quickly ; indeed, as the boat falls gradually down the stream, it generally comes over them conveniently enough.

To these various methods of taking fish, I must add the destruction by means of rake-hooks. The tackle is very simple : it consists of two strong hooks, about two or three inches long, tied back to back, and fastened to twisted gut, on which are put five or six large shot, at equal distances from each other. The fisherman, with a strong rod, throws the line, with these bare hooks attached to it, about a foot beyond any salmon that he may discover lying, and then with a sudden jerk draws the hook into him if he can, and gets him to the land if he is able.\*

\* “ Snatching,” as this method of catching fish is called, is on the whole the meanest form of poaching ever devised. It is, of course, illegal now, but it is still very widely practised on rivers all over the country. Some sort of colourable imitation of a legitimate lure is usually employed, such as a double-hooked fly with lead in its body, which will sink quickly. While salmon continue to be the valuable rarities they are it is pretty hopeless to attempt to eradicate this evil. If they were as plentiful as Nature intended them to be fair fishing would become the rule and snatching would be generally accounted disreputable.—(ED.)

Clean fish are sometimes taken in this manner, and most fishermen are provided with the tackle. In a very low water in the summer, when fly-fishing might have been said to be over, I once hooked a good salmon in the Quarry stream above Melrose Bridge. As a fish was at that time a great rarity, I was particularly cautious in leading him ; nevertheless, with all my care, the hook, not having a firm hold, came away from him after I had played him a considerable time.

Purdie saw him lying in rather an exhausted state in the same stream, which was shallow, and, without saying any thing to me, to my great surprise, seized hold of my casting line and broke off the lower end of it ; opened my book ; took a pair of rake-hooks from it ; tied them on to the line, and, at the second throw, tucked them into the salmon ; put the rod into my hands, and I killed the fish after all.

All this to the Southern ear sounds like poaching of the most flagitious description ; but a salmon is a fish of passage, and if you do not get him to-day he will be gone to-morrow. The Tweed used to let for above £12,000 a year ; judge, then, in what a wholesale manner these fish are caught by long nets and other sweeping modes ; yet in what profusion they continue to be found ! You may just as well think of preserving herrings or mackerel as these delicious creatures ; and there would be no objection to your taking 3378 salmon at one haul, if fortune would so favour you, as Commander Ross did at Boothia Felix on the 26th of July, 1831.

Keep *Close time* strictly ; kill no spawning fish ;

tamper not with foul ones of any sort ; preserve the fry ; send the black fishers to Iceland ; but catch as many salmon as you can, *recte si possis* (meaning with a rod), *si non, quocunque modo*—that is, with a net or leister, and so forth.\*

\* Nowadays we should edit Scrope's table of commandments pretty severely. Cf. Introduction.—(ED.)

## CHAPTER XI

" 'Tis night, dread night, and weary Nature lies  
So fast as if she never were to rise ;  
Lean wolves forget to howl at night's pale noon ;  
No wakeful dogs bark at the silent moon,  
Nor bay the ghosts which glide in horror by  
To view the caverns where their bodies lie ;  
The ravens perch, and no presages give,  
Nor to the windows of the dying cleave ;  
In vaults the walking fires extinguish'd lie ;  
The stars, heaven's sentry, wink and seem to die." —LEE.

**B**EFORE I describe what is called "burning the water," I will make an observation that may be of service to the rod fisher. It is, that salmon which have been disturbed in the night with boats and lights will draw into the streams above, and take the fly all the better for this disturbance the following morning ; and as burning always takes place when the water is very low, they probably will not be found far from the place of the nocturnal operations.

Trout also will take better for having been routed about, and for change of situation ; a remarkable instance of which I witnessed a few years ago at Castle Combe. A hole under some hatches by a mill was emptied of its water, that the trout might be caught and taken lower down the stream, more out of the way of poachers. This was done by means of buckets, and in doing it the water became thick and

white, and the fish partook of the same colour. I sent thirty-five brace of these fish, all similar in size, a considerable distance lower down the stream, when they were put under a bridge near my house. Many of them died. But in three hours after the removal I caught eight of the others with a fly without moving from the spot : neither the size nor the colour of the fish could possibly be mistaken.

## THE BURNING

"Charlie, Charlie," cried Thomas Jamieson, "there's fine sport going on the night ; our maister's minded to burn the water, for she is low enough, ye ken ; so ane o' us will hae to gang and split the twa auld tar barrels for lights, an' the ither mun slider up to Abbotsford and tell your uncle Tam what's ganging forrat, and say that he has to meet us at the Carrywheel at eight o'clock precessely. Charlie, ye'd best do the lights yoursel', and I'll hae to win to Darnick, and get the wasters aw new sharpened. Sandy and Rob will come nae doobt, and we should hae auld Wat too ; but if he has been fou yestreen, he'll no be worth a bawbee."

"Ye need na fash yoursel' aboot the like o' him, for he had a wee drap. I saw him the morn riddling a cart fu' o' sand lyin' again the house end, which he said he was making ready for biggin ; and as I was coming awa' auld Janet gie me a wag wi' her finger, and I gist steppit in. 'What do ye think ?' says she ; 'the auld vagabun was fou yestreen, and he gaed out as he thought unseen by ony ; a' watched him, and he hid his siller amang the sand,

for he aye thinks I grap his pouches for it. After he was awa' I sliddered out and fun' his purse ; there war seeven shillings and a groat in it ; so I gaed to auld Mary Butler's, and bought yetmeal for the bairns' parritch wi' it, and ye see the auld cuffer is riddling the sand, thinking to find his purse. He'll no be worth a rigmaree the night for fishing.' "

" Aweel, Charlie, Janet says true ; but wha mun we hae to lead hame the fish ? Tam Hardy or Rob Colyard would mak' good fun. Tam, he'll tell us that lang story aboot the scramble, and the muckle fish he killed in Leader-water, that misured nine inches atween the een ; and if we hae Rob, he'll get a stick and be gaun through his braidsword exercise, and tell us how he did wi' the twa Frenchmen on the field of Waterloo ; so Rob may meet us wi' his cart to tak' hame the fish, when we come to Brig-end pool. We mun now tak' up the twa boats to the Carrywheel, where they will bide our coming at night ;—and look here, mon : when we are in a sweet wi' pooing them up, we will tak' a wee drap out o' this black bottle."

The boat in general use for burning at night is larger than the rod fishing boats, as more room and steadiness is required. In the centre of it, close to the side on which the leisterers strike the fish, is a pole fixed vertically, with a frame at top of it formed of ribs of iron to contain the combustibles. Three men are sufficient to man the boat ; one at the head, another at the stern, as boatmen and leisterers, and the third at the centre to kill the fish

and trim the fire. But it will contain more men, if necessary.

The remainder of the day having been spent in making the arrangements, and the proper hour being now come, Harry Otter and Charlie Purdie went out from the Pavilion to meet the party, who were to assemble at eight o'clock about a mile and a half up the river. The night was most favourable, it being utterly dark, and not a sough of air stirring. With caution and with difficulty they felt their way step by step at the rocky base of the Scaur, where it dips into the river, till they descried the boat which was to take them across it at the Brig-end pool. The clanking of the chain as it was loosened and flung on the planks sounded harshly in the silence of night ; the oars dipped duly, and they were soon on the opposite side of the river, by which means they cut off a great sweep of the haugh, "a huge half moon, a monstrous cantle out," and proceeded in a more direct line to their mark. They went on in darkness through the chilling dews, now and then stumbling into the patches of furze which were scattered over the haugh ; soon they begin to hear the rushing of the waters through the gorge of the Carry-wheel : now it breaks full and loud upon the ear, for they are arrived at the base of the wooded brae that overhangs the cast.

Two groups of men, but dimly seen, here await their arrival ; one consists of spectators lying on the ground with their plaids thrown athwart their bodies, and the other of the heroes who were to figure in the grand operation : these latter were

sitting on the boats, and on the masses of rock beside them on the water edge.

All being now ready, a light was struck ; and the spark being applied to rags steeped in pitch, and to fragments of tar-barrels, they blazed up at once amid the gloom, like the sudden flash from the crater of a volcano. The ruddy light glared on the rough features and dark dresses of the leisterers in cutting flames directly met by black shadows—an effect which those will best understand who in the Eternal City have seen the statues in the Vatican by torch-light. Extending itself, it reddened the shelving rocks above, and glanced upon the blasted arms of the trees, slowly perishing in their struggle for existence amongst the stony crevices ; it glowed upon the hanging wood, on fir, birch, broom, and bracken, half veiled, or half revealed, as they were more or less prominent. The form of things remote from the concentrated light was dark and dubious ; even the trees on the summit of the brae sank in obscurity.

The principals now sprang into the boats. Harry Otter stood at the head, and Charlie Purdie at the stern. These men regulated the course of the craft with their leisters ; the auxiliaries were stationed between them, and the light was in the centre by the boat side. The logs, steeped as they were in pitch, crackled and burned fiercely, sending up a column of black smoke. As the rude forms of the men rose up in their dark attire, wielding their long leisters, with the streaks of light that glared partially upon them, and surrounded as they were by the shades of

night, you might almost have fancied yourself in the realms below, with Pluto and his grim associates, embarked on the Stygian lake. But as the sports began, and as the Scotch accent prevailed, the illusion passed away ; for no poet, that I am aware of, has made the above swarthy and mysterious personages express themselves in the language of Tweedside ; nor could one fancy salmon in the Styx, though they might well disport in the streams of the happy fields beyond.

" Now, my lads," says the master, " take your places. Tom, stand you next to me ; Sandy, go on the other side of Tom ; and do you, Jamie, keep in the middle, and take tent to cap the boats well over the rapids. Rob, do you and Tom Purdie keep good lights and fell the fish. Halloo, Tom, you have smuggled a leister into the boat for your own use."

" Ay, ay, that have I, joust for mine ain deversation, ye ken."

" Well, well, you may just keep it, for you are a stout chiel, and it would be hard work to get it from you ; besides, no one can use it more dexterously than yourself. Now, then, we will push the boat up the cheek of the stream till we come to the head of it. That will do. Now shoot her across the gorge, and down she goes merrily, broadside foremost, according to rule. Cap, Charlie, cap, man ; we are drifting down like mad ; keep back your end of the boat."

" Aweel, aweel, she gangs cannily now ; look, uncle, a muckle fish before ye ; or ever ye kent, the maister's leister gaed through him, and played auld dife. That side, that side, Jamie ;—he's rinnin up

to get past. Od, ye have him ; and I hae anither, and anither. Keep a gude light, Tom. Now let us tak' up the boat to the head of the stream, or ever we look the stanes, for there war a muckle fish ganged by that none o' ye gomrells ever saw. There, we are high eneuch now ; haud yer hand, and let her faw doon again : hey, but I see him the noo afore me ;—ou, what an awfu' beast."

So saying, Charlie drove his leister furiously at him ; but whether one of the prongs struck against the edge of the rock above him, which prevented its descent to the bottom, or from whatever other cause, the stroke was unsuccessful, and as he lifted the barren weapon out of the water, there arose a merry shout and guffaw from the spectators on the shore.

"Cap ! cap !" cried Charlie, "now haud yer hand ; gie me up the boat ;—od, but I'll hae him yet ; he's gone amangst thae hiding stanes."

So saying, Charlie brought the head of the boat to the stream, pushed her higher up, and pulled her ashore ; he then landed, and seizing a brand out of the fire, put it into Jamieson's hand, who preceded his eager steps like a male Thais, or one of the Eumenides in pantaloons. He now stood upon a rock which hung over the river, and from that eminence, and with the assistance of the firebrand, examined the bottom of it carefully. His body was bent over the water, and his ready leister held almost vertically ; as the light glared on his face you might see the keen glistening of his eye. In an instant he raised up his leister, and down he sprang from the

rock right into the river, and with that wild bound nailed the salmon to the channel. There was a struggle with his arms for a few seconds ; he then passed his hands down the pole of the weapon a little way, brought himself vertically over the fish, and lifted him aloft cheered by shouts of applause from his friends on the shore.

Two or three more fish were taken amongst the stones at the tail of the cast, and the sport in the Carrywheel being now ended, the fish were stowed in the hold of the boat, the crew jumped ashore, and a right hearty appeal was made to the whiskey bottle. It was first tendered to the veteran Tom Purdie, to whom it was always observed to have a natural gravitation, but to the astonishment of all, he barely put his lips to the quaigh, and passed it to his nephew.

“ Why, uncle mon, what the deil’s come ower ye ? I never kent ye refuse a drappie afore, no not sin I war a callant ; I canna thole to see ye gang that gait.”

“ Why, I’ll tell ye what it is, Charlie. I got a repreef from Sir Walter for being fou the ither nicht.”\*

“ Eh, uncle, how was that ? ”

“ ‘ Why,’ says Sir Walter, ‘ Tom,’ says he, ‘ I sent for ye on Monday, and ye were not at hame at aight o’clock ; I doubt ye were fou, Tom ’ : ‘ I’ll joust tell ye the hale truth,’ says I, ‘ I gaed round

\* It may not be uninteresting to recall the fact that Sir Walter Scott himself wrote in praise of “ the picturesque and manly sport of burning the water,” referring to himself as “ an old spearman.” This was in the edition of Richard Franck’s curious *Northern Memoirs* which he edited, anonymously, in 1821.—(ED.)

by the men at wark at Rymer's Glen, and cam in by Tarfield ; then I went to Darnick, and had a glass o' whiskey wi' Sandy Trummel at Susy's, and I war joust coming awa when Rob steppit in, and cried for half a mutchkin. I was na for takkin mair, but the glasses were filled, and I did not like to be beat wi' them, so I tuk mine.' ' And is that all you had, Tom ? ' said Sir Walter. ' Aye, indeed was it,' said I ; ' but, Heaven have a care o' me, I never was the war of it, till I was ganging up by Jemmy Mercer's by Coat's Green ; and when I cam up by Kerr side I wanted to see Maister Laidlaw, but I thought I durst na gang in ; and how I got hame I dinna ken, for I never mindet it na mair ; but our wife war in a terrible bad key the morning, because I war sair wanted last nicht.'

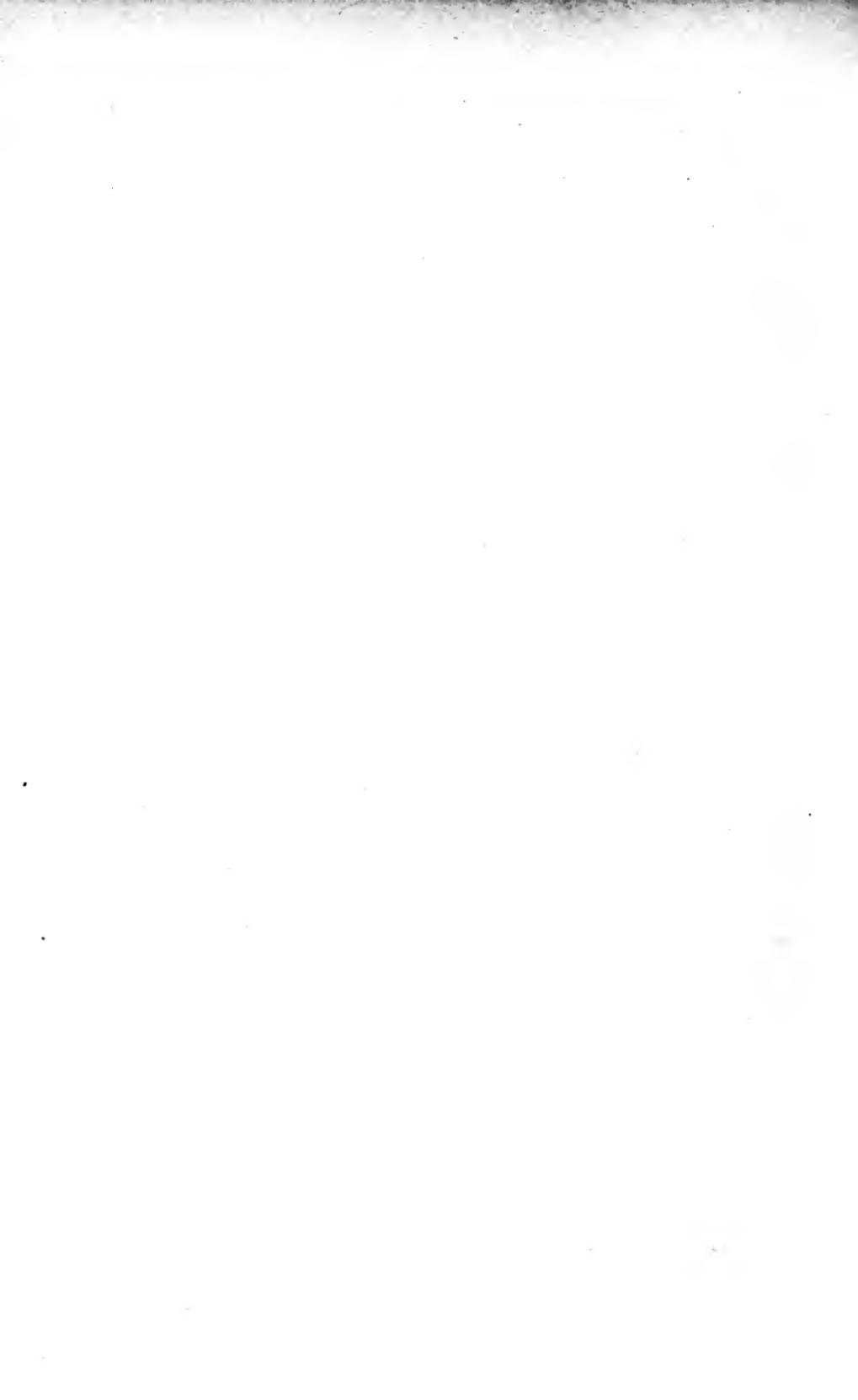
" ' Well,' said the maister, ' ye mun never do the like again, Tom.' We then ganged to the woods, and thinned the trees ; and I laboured with the axe at thae that Sir Walter marked.

" ' Now Tom,' says he, ' you will go home with me, for you have been working very hard, and a glass of whiskey will do you good ' ; and he cawed to Nicholson to bring Tom a glass o' Glenlivet. I tuk it doon ; and, mon, if yee'd found it, it beat a' the whiskey I ever tasted in my life. ' Well, Tom,' said Sir Walter, ' how do ye feel after it ? Do ye think another glass will do ye ony harm ? ' I said naething, but I thought I wad like anither, and Nicholson poured out ain, and I tuk it. Then the maister said, ' Tom, do ye feel ony thing the war o' it ? ' ' Nau, nau,' said I, ' but it's terrible powerfu',

STRIKING FROM AN EMINENCE

H. M. Simpson, Jr.





and three times as strang as ony whiskey I ever drank in my life.' 'Then, Tom,' says Sir Walter, 'never tell me that three glasses o' Susy's whiskey will fill ye fou, when ye have drank twa of mine, which you say is three times as strong, and you feel all the better for it.' Hey, mon, I never was so taen by the face in a' my life ! I didna ken where to luk. The deil faw me if ever he cotch me so again ! "

Tom Purdie's forbearance, however, was not of an enduring quality ; his eyes glistened as he followed the course of the bottle ; three times was his arm extended to make a grap at it, and thrice did he draw it back with modest confusion. At length when all were served he could hold out no longer, but elongating his dexter, he laid fast hold of the bottle, and filling the quaigh to the brim, "Here goes," said he, "to the lousy stranger." After he had drunk, and mended his draught, he kept the bottle in his own custody, with a pretty smart allowance in it, in the character of residuary legatee. I had an account, however, to settle with him ; for being the only stranger in company, I fancied his toast meant a reflection upon my cleanliness. What did he mean by the dirty and degrading epithet ? This I demanded, advancing with a warlike countenance, and leister in the rest ; and had not Tom been in a very benign humour, this book might never have been inflicted on the public, for the man was well armed and resolute, and might have leistered me according to art. But putting on his sweetest smile, he assured me that by the "lousy stranger" he meant a newly run fish with tide lice on it, "which,"

said he, "are far the best, ye ken." This I well knew, though the application did not occur to me at the moment. And here, by the way I beg to observe, however odd it may seem, that you may know the best *clean* fish, by their having tide lice upon them.

"All hands to the boat again. Come, Rob, give us a merry blaze ; never spare the tar barrel : well done, Vulcan ! Now we have a splendid light on the water, and can see well enough to read small print at the bottom of it."

"Sandy Trummel, ye great bear, what gars ye stamp and scream at that rate ?"

Sandy in fact not only stamped and screamed, but swore that he was dreadfully *brunt* with the pieces of charcoal and drops of flaming pitch which insinuated themselves between his shirt and cape of his jacket behind ; whereat Tom Purdie, who was a considerate and humane man, took up the scoop which was used for ladling out the boat, and filling that capacious utensil with water to the extent of its capacity, came behind the aggrieved, and emptied the whole contents down his back. "And now Sandy, mon," says he, "I hae made ye quite comfortable, and ye owe me a gude turn." But, who would have thought it ? The blood of the Trummels was up ; and seizing a firebrand in a style that did little honour to his gratitude, the diluted one rushed forward intent on vengeance. Grim looked Tom Purdie, and charging with his leister, he held the foeman at bay. Who can say what Homeric deeds might not have been done, had not Charlie, first whispering to the master to *stand fast*, given the

boat a sudden whirl round with the stroke of an oar, which laid Tom Purdie flat upon his back at the bottom of the boat, and canted Sandy Trummel fairly overboard? He fell in rather a picturesque attitude, for which I cannot in candour give him much credit, as the affair seemed to be quite involuntary and too sudden for him to study effect. His right hand held the torch aloft for a moment, Marmion fashion, which soon fell and hissed in the current with a train of smoke which trailed along the surface of the water. Sandy's feet were actively employed in kicking his best, by which means he agitated the water in such a manner that, with the assistance of the light, it made a very brilliant and imposing appearance. The stream here being very shallow, he soon began to emerge, and about two thirds of his fair proportions rose up from the channel; his mouth seemed full of water and abuse; he soon got rid of the one; but before he could vent the other, he was anticipated by the boat's crew, who all shouted out shame upon him for his awkwardness, and for having nearly upset the boat in his fall, and endangered the lives of several worthy individuals. Thus a sort of balance was struck between faults on both sides, and Tom Purdie himself assisted him to regain the boat; "and Sandy mon," said he, as he lifted him in, "I shall be always willing to do ye the same good service when ye need it; so yee'l let me ken when the burning pick gets aboard ye again."

They now passed over some bare streams where no salmon would lie; the navigation amongst the

rocks was somewhat intricate, there being barely room for the width of the boat in some of the rapids ; but Charles Purdie hit the thing off to a nicety. They then burned the *Glass-wheel Pot*, the *Oak Tree*, and the *Noirs*, in all of which they got a few fish.

"Rob," said Charlie, "wail out some o' yer sticks that they may be weel kinelt afore we get into Brig-end Pule ; now, lads, ye mun cap well here, for she will gang ower the stream wi' a terrible flee ; od, I see them glancing down the pule as thick as herrin ; Sandy, mon, but ye're dancing again ; what's come ower ye ? ye'll be wanting Tom Purdie's big ladle again, I'm thinkin."

"The deil may hae Tam Purdie and his muckle ladle ; for as he nockit off a bit fish in the boat, he dung yun o' the taes o' the waster intil ma leg, he is aye sae camsterie."

"Ye canna blame me, Sandy, for the mischanter, for ye are aye stammering among the fish like a haveril as ye are, and half fou into the bargain. Halloo, Sandy, ye'll no crack o' yer deeds the nicht, for yer waster's aye clanking against the stanes, whilst the maister is striking the fish afore ye by dizens ; and see, muckle Tam has lifted in yun amaist as lang as himsel."

"Come, come, lads," says the master, "hold your clish-ma-clavers, for we are just going into Brig-end Pool ; so keep back the boat as well as you can, or we shall go fiery fast over the stream."

As the boat neared the pool, the men shouted out, "Auld Michael ! auld Michael ! the charm for auld Michael Scott : trim the boat, and take care the

muckle wizard does na loup intil her." " Oh, lads," cries Tom Purdie, " pit yer best fut foremost ; they are lying afore us like sacks, and will be as thick as you can dab them up. Mind the light, Sandy, and take care that kipper does na wallop out o' the boat. See what a muckle fish Charlie has got ! "

In fact the men were making a great slaughter ; and when they had gone over the pool two or three times, had half filled the boat with the spoil ; so as they found they were well laden, they called to Rob Colyard to come forward with his cart and take them home.

" Shove the boat to the shore ; Colyard, come forrat wi' yer cart ; that'll do, mon ; aw honds to wark, count the fish as ye pit them in ; Charlie, how many hae ye coonted ? "

" There jest a hunder and twa, great and smaw, whitling, bull-trout, saumonts, and a'thegither."

The men passed round the whiskey bottle, and we resumed our sport ; I, Harry Otter, stood as before at the head of the boat, and the other men in their allotted places ; we passed pretty swiftly down the streams, broadside in front, striking many fish, till we came near the Elfin Burn, when, observing that the water-break in the centre of the river, caused by a concealed rock, was more gentle than usual, I thought the boat would strike, so I called out to Charlie for caution.

" Houte, toute, he mun let her gang ; there is plenty of water to take her over."

Charlie Purdie was never more mistaken in his life ; the stream drove us downward at a rapid race,

notwithstanding we in some measure moderated it by capping our best with the leisters. Bang went the boat's broadside right against the rock, to which she stuck fast till the stream above poured into her in the most effective possible style, and down she went of course. The water, however, was by no means deep ; but those fish, which we had taken since the load went home, found their way again into the river, and began to vanish down the streams. Being deprived of life, they went passively along, followed by all the boat's crew, who rushed about and charged with their leisters, "hurry, hurry, spalsh, spalsh," till they fished out most of them, the remainder being left to solace the eels. This in common parlance would be called a disaster ; a sort of shipwreck in miniature ; but judging from the merriment it excited, it might be deemed the best sport of the night.

Whilst these gambols were carrying on, and the men were rolling about in the waters, after the guise of sea calves, Charlie Purdie and I had got the boat to the shore, and heaving her upon her side, had poured the water out : "And now, Purdie," said I, "whilst these clever fellows are catching dead fish, do tell me what you all meant by shouting out 'auld Michael !' and calling for the charm at the Brig-end Pool ?"

"Why ye mun ken that Michael Scott, who lived in bygane times, was a warlock, and I cud tell ye mony wonderfu' cracks aboot him, for the hale country rings wi' his foul deeds. Mony years syne there was a brig at yon cast, but the spate ran away

a' foreby the middle pillar, which stud up in the water as high as ever ; and as the fishermen o' thae days were burning the *Noirs*, they saw a muckle man sitting a tap o' the pillar, wi' a flaming brand in the tae hand, and a lang leister in the tither ; he had a hairy cap on his head, made, perhaps, o' the fur o' the tod, or some sic like beastie, and a long gown on, wi' a linnen dress aneath it, a' doon to his knees, tied rund wi' a queer girdle, which was written aboot wi' magic words, and a lang whinger stuck intill it ; we hae Sir Walter's word for it, ye ken. Aweel, the fishermen who war in the boat were sair frightned, and in ganging doon the water, got as far frae him as they cud, and, as they thought, out o' reach o' him ; but he louped frae the pillar intill the boat from an awfu' distance, and doon she went so soon as he set fut or hoof in her ; and a' the men war drowned, and left the bonny banks o' the Tweed wi' all their sins on their heads. Then the foul wizard, Michael Scott, was seen by some folks on shore, to rise up and loup on a muckle black horse, that came doon frae the cluds, and he fled awa on it till he became inveesable. The folk at Darnick pu'd down the pillar ; they did na lave ae stane on anither. Aye, aye, ye may laugh and call this clish-ma-claver if ye please, but it's true what I tell ye ; I have seen auld Michael mysel."

" Where, Charlie, where ? "

" Why aince on Cowden-knows I seed his wraith, and his torch a tap o' the hill, and his muckle black horse feeding below on the moor, as plain as I see ye the noo ; and though he is not in life at this day,

for he war killed by drinking the kail made o' a breme sow, yet his spirit is abraid, ye ken, and it war that which sent our boat to the bottom, for ye had na a fairy stane ;\* but ye'll be wiser, I'm thinkin, afore ye burn that cast again."

"Aye, that will I ; but courage, man ; all is set to rights, so let us have the whiskey, for with that and the blazing brands we shall be warm both within and without, and fear no wizards. But if wizards ever visit rivers, I hope they will open a slap in every cauld where there is no local act, so as to admit of the free run of fish ; for there are many fine-looking streams that are 'bridled with a curb of stone.' I do not wish to hurt the property of mill-owners ; but how easy it would be in such cases to accommodate all parties by making an opening at every barrier, and a proper slope constructed with rolling stones at the back of it ; a hatch to be put in at the opening, and drawn only when there was a superfluity of water for the mill. This plan would answer perfectly ; for in very low water fish do not travel, and in a very high one, when they do, the miller would suffer no loss."

"Well, I wad na say but ye are perfectly right, and I am thinking that a river, like a road, should be open for all passengers."

Most of the dead salmon having been at length forked out of the river, we all got afloat again, and passed down those rapids above Melrose Bridge, called "*the Quarry Stream*," "*Back Brae*," and "*Kingswell Lees*," snatching out a fish occasionally

\* See note at page 237.

in our course ; then the flame soon gleamed upon the bridge, struck upwards on the roof of the vast arch as we shot through it, and revealed the dark pines below, which shelved down to the margin of the river.

We were now in a salmon cast called "*the Whirls*," which runs deep and solemn, and we had scarcely set our leisters in the rest, ere we found that a fisherman had been to work before us, and an excellent hand he was at the sport ; he had neither light nor boat, and, being tolerably hungry, I suppose, was devouring a twelve-pounder, all raw as it was, in the dry channel of the river.

" See ! the otter, the otter ! he has got into the water. Bring round the boat—quick, quick. Now keep her on the edge of the deep current, and we shall leister him to a certainty." No such thing. He had not yet made up his mind to be leistered ; and, being of a solitary disposition, rather shunned our society than otherwise ; so, instead of attempting to gain the main stream, he went insidiously down the shallows, where no boat could swim. He was thus out of the reach of being speared in the usual manner ; but Charlie Purdie had a go at him by flinging his leister from a distance—

" Nequicquam patrias tentasti lubricus artes,  
Vane Ligur."

It was a complete failure. Charlie followed up the thing, however, by leaping out of the boat ; nothing could be fairer or more honourable, as he thus gave the amphibious animal the advantage of element. The men were all eager and in commotion ; so what

with boat and lights, to say nothing of the dreadful tridents, the beast was fairly confused, and almost surrounded. Purdie, who had sent away his leister upon a vain errand, albeit unarmed, continued the chase on foot, and at length gripped the brute by the tail ; there was pulling and splashing, till at last he held the otter up aloft triumphantly. Now as this position, though not precisely vertical, did not happen to suit the brute's convenience, the subtle animal managed to twist round, and to fix his teeth on the captor's arm. This was rather disagreeable to Charlie, as the teeth of the otter abound in practical experiments. The posture of affairs then, you see, was as follows :—the tenacious Purdie had hold of the vermin with his dexter, and was loth to relinquish his grip ; the foe, nothing behind in tenacity, fixed his teeth in Charlie's sinister with equal perseverance; thus both his arms were fully occupied. Nothing daunted, Charlie cried out with Spartan endurance, “ Hey, lad, but twae can play at that ! ” So, extending his jaws, he fixed his grinders in the animal's throat and worried him exceedingly. In fine, after a very ludicrous struggle, he shook off my excellent namesake and flung him on the shore, where he was despatched with the leisters before he could regain the river. Thus ended “ the battle of Otterbourne ” ; and thus ended, also, our sport for the night ; for the beast, no doubt, had disturbed that cast, which, together with the lower water, was set apart for another night's amusement.

We now marched home with our spoil, triumphant ;—Sandy in front, with the blazing beacon over

his shoulder to light our steps, as has been practised from time immemorial ; the others with the fish and leisters. One of the spectators began a *concordia discors* with his bagpipe, but bad us adieu at Melrose Bridge, and the dulcet sounds died away among the pine woods and furze brakes of the Eildon Hills. Then it was that we had the good fortune to meet my most humorous and excellent friend Sir Adam Ferguson, who made rare amends for the loss of our piper, by singing the following strains in his richest style ; which, as they are not very well known in the South, I venture to subscribe.

“ The Laird o’ Cockpen, he’s proud and he’s great ;  
His mind’s ta’en up wi’ the things o’ the state ;  
He wanted a wife his braw house to keep,  
But favor wi’ wooing was fashous to seek.

“ Down by the dyke-side a leddie did dwell,  
At the head o’ his table he thocht she’d look well,  
Macleish’s ae dochter o’ Claver’s Ha’ Lee,  
A penniless lass, wi’ a lang pedigree.

“ His wig was well pouthered, and maist gude as new ;  
His waistcoat was red, his coat it was blue ;  
A ring on his finger, his sword and cockt hat,  
And wha could refuse the laird wi’ aw that ?

“ He mounted his meer, he rode cannilie,  
And rapt at the yett o’ Clavers Ha’ Lee ;  
‘ Gae tell Mrs. Jean to come speedilie ben,  
She’s wanted to speak to the Laird o’ Cockpen.’

“ Mrs. Jean she was makin’ the elder flower wine ;  
‘ And what brings the laird at sic a like time ? ’  
She threw aff her apron, put on her silk gown,  
Her mutch wi’ red ribbons, and cam awa down.

“ And whan she cam in he bowed fu’ low,  
And soon his errand he let her to know ;  
Amazed was the laird whan the leddie said naw,  
But wi’ a laigh courtsy she turned awa.

“ Dum-foundeder he was, nae sicgh did he gie,  
He mounted his meer, he rode cannilie ;  
But said to himsel, as he gaed through the glen,  
‘ She was daft to refuse the laird o’ Cockpen ! ’ ”

It had been my intention to give an account of the burning of the water from Melrose Bridge to the Cauld Pool, and so on to Cow’s Hole ; but the description, if faithful, would be so similar to the one already given, that it would be lamentably tiresome, and I have been ultra-tedious already. Besides it must be considered that I have been out of my bed most part of the night ; that I am to the full as sleepy as any of my readers can possibly be ; and, moreover, that my back is half frozen, whilst my front is scorched with the firebrands.

Farewell, then, dear brothers of the angle ; and when you go forth to take your pleasure, either in the mountain stream that struggles and roars through the narrow pass, or in the majestic salmon river that sweeps in lucid mazes through the vale, may your sport be ample, and your hearts light ! But should the fish prove more sagacious than yourselves—a circumstance, excuse me, that is by no means impossible ; should they, alas—but fate avert it—reject your hooked gifts, the course of the river will always lead you to pleasant places. In these we leave you to the quiet enjoyment of the



Male Spring Salmon, 36½ lb., caught from the Wye, Feb., 1920.  
Maiden fish. Note only two "spots" on gill covers and none below lateral line.



glorious works of the Creation, whether it may be your pleasure to go forth when the spring sheds its flowery fragrance, or in the more advanced season, when the sere leaf is shed incessantly and wafted on the surface of the swoln river.

## APPENDIX

### MODERN TWEED FLIES

AS a contrast to the old patterns of salmon fly figured by Scrope, Mr. John Forrest, of Thomas Street, Oxford Street (the London branch of the famous Tweedside tackle house, Forrest and Sons, Kelso), has very kindly dressed four of the most popular flies invented on Tweedside and used on Tweed to-day, which are shown in the plate at page 130. They are : the Black Ranger, the Greenwell, the Wilkinson, and the Jock Scott. There are, of course, many other favourite flies used by Tweed anglers, but these four are probably to be found on their tippets more often than any others. They are almost as popular on many other rivers, of course. The Wilkinson and the Greenwell were invented respectively by Mr. P. S. Wilkinson and the Rev. (afterwards Canon) W. Greenwell who were fishing companions of the late Mr. William Henderson, author of that attractive book *My Life as an Angler*, which contains many pages on Tweed fishing. Both flies, as he tells us, seem to have owed their origin to a pattern devised by Henderson "with white silk body, golden-crest wings, blue chatterer

shoulders and grey tippet." Mr. Henderson goes on to say :—

Here was a fly that certainly did show startlingly in black water, and the result was that on the morrow I took eight grilse and rose eight more fish, while no angler in the neighbourhood captured more than a couple. It was still more remarkable that on none of my later fishings had I any great success with this fly except the "William Henderson." Some years afterwards the idea of a white-bodied fly was improved upon both by Mr. W. Greenwell and Mr. P. S. Wilkinson. The former invented a fly whose chief characteristic was a pale blue silk and silver body, whilst the latter boldly struck out into the notion of a body of silver tinsel. These flies are now acknowledged to be among the best used on the river, if not the very best.

If Mr. Wilkinson was the first fly-dresser to use a silver body at all he deserves a statue to his memory, for the tinsel body (gold tinsel is as effective in some conditions) is a very important matter in salmon fishing, as will be seen in the next note. Canon Greenwell was the inventor of that invaluable trout fly the Greenwell's Glory, which is as famous as any fly in the whole cabinet of trout patterns.

The Jock Scott is perhaps the best known salmon fly there is, partly because of its bold contrast of colours, black and orange, but partly because of its simple and easily remembered name. When the novelist or story-writer portrays an angler and desires to make him life-like or convincing he, or she, almost always attaches a Jock Scott to his cast. It is the fly, *par excellence*, which is known to the great outer world, and I suppose that this is due to the mnemonic quality of its name. It will not be without interest to give the history of this fly which

has very kindly been furnished by Mr. John Forrest's brother, Mr. W. T. Forrest of Kelso. He tells us the tale as it was told to him by his father, Mr. George Forrest, on August 20th, 1907. It is :—

Jock Scott, fisherman to Lord John Scott of Kirkbank, brother of the Duke of Buccleuch, made a fly for his lordship on his going to Norway some fifty years ago about the year 1860. At that time it had no name. When Lord John Scott died Jock Scott was out of a job, and my grandfather asked him to make some flies for him as a means of making a livelihood, until he could get a job. One day he brought in about a dozen and a half. A few days afterwards Robert Honeyman, fisherman at Bemersyde, came into my grandfather's shop and told him there were some salmon in his water, which could be seen from the bank. Would he come up and try for them ? My grandfather agreed to go, and picked out two or three of the flies which Jock Scott had made. He started to fish, and Honeyman saw three fish take the fly, and my grandfather safely landed all three.

He was so pleased that he turned to Honeyman and said : " Well this is one of the best bits of sport I have ever had, and this fly was originally made by Jock Scott for Lord John Scott, so we will have to call it the 'Jock Scott,' " and as the Jock Scott it has been known ever since. Every gentleman who went to Bemersyde after that fished with the Jock Scott.

#### THE FLY AND THE FISH

The theory of fly-dressing has received a powerful new incentive in recent years by the under-water photographic studies of Dr. Francis Ward of Ipswich. This gentleman constructed an observation chamber below the level of a clear pool with a glass window through which he could observe the appearance of fish, flies, etc., from the point of view of one of the creatures which dwell below the water. His conclusions, which are of very great interest, are set

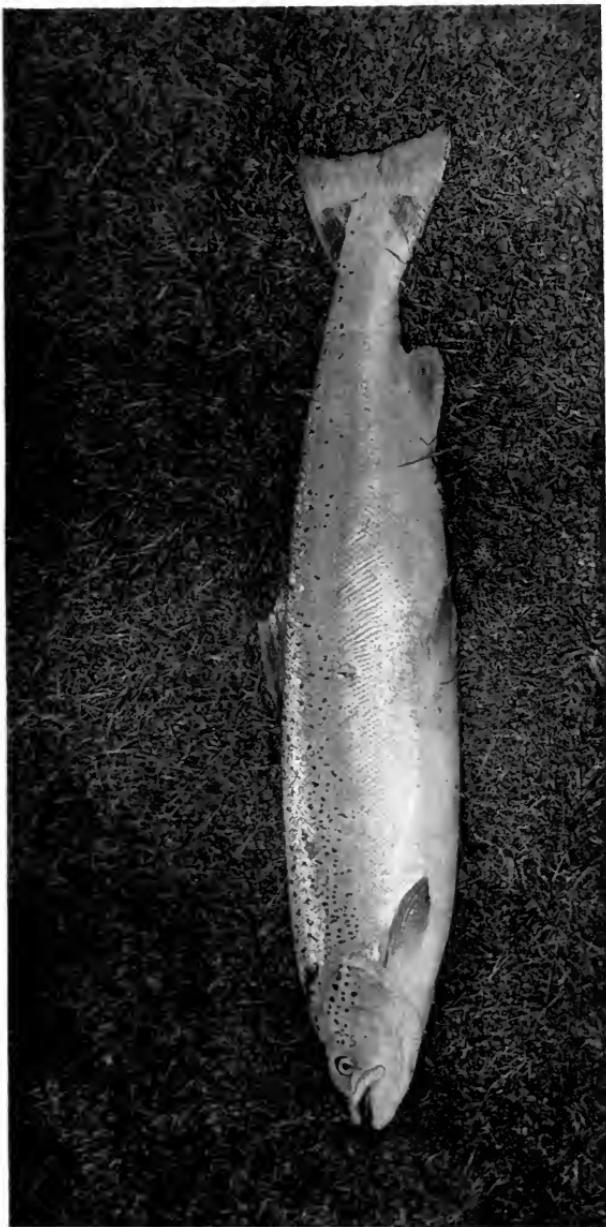
out at length in his latest book, *Animal Life under Water*, 1919. Various steps in the progress of his investigations as to the appearance of flies, etc., to the eye of a fish, were described by him in *The Field* during 1912 and 1913, with illustrations, but the sum and substance of it all may be found in the book.

Much of the investigation was directed to the appearance of the trout-fisher's floating flies, which hardly concerns us in the consideration of salmon, though salmon have occasionally been caught on dry flies, and indeed the late Major J. R. Fraser of Romsey used to make a practice of dry-fly fishing for them, using patterns which were a sort of cross between small salmon flies and Mayflies. But I do not think that dry-fly fishing is ever likely to become a popular method of tempting salmon. I have tried it on various occasions without the least result.

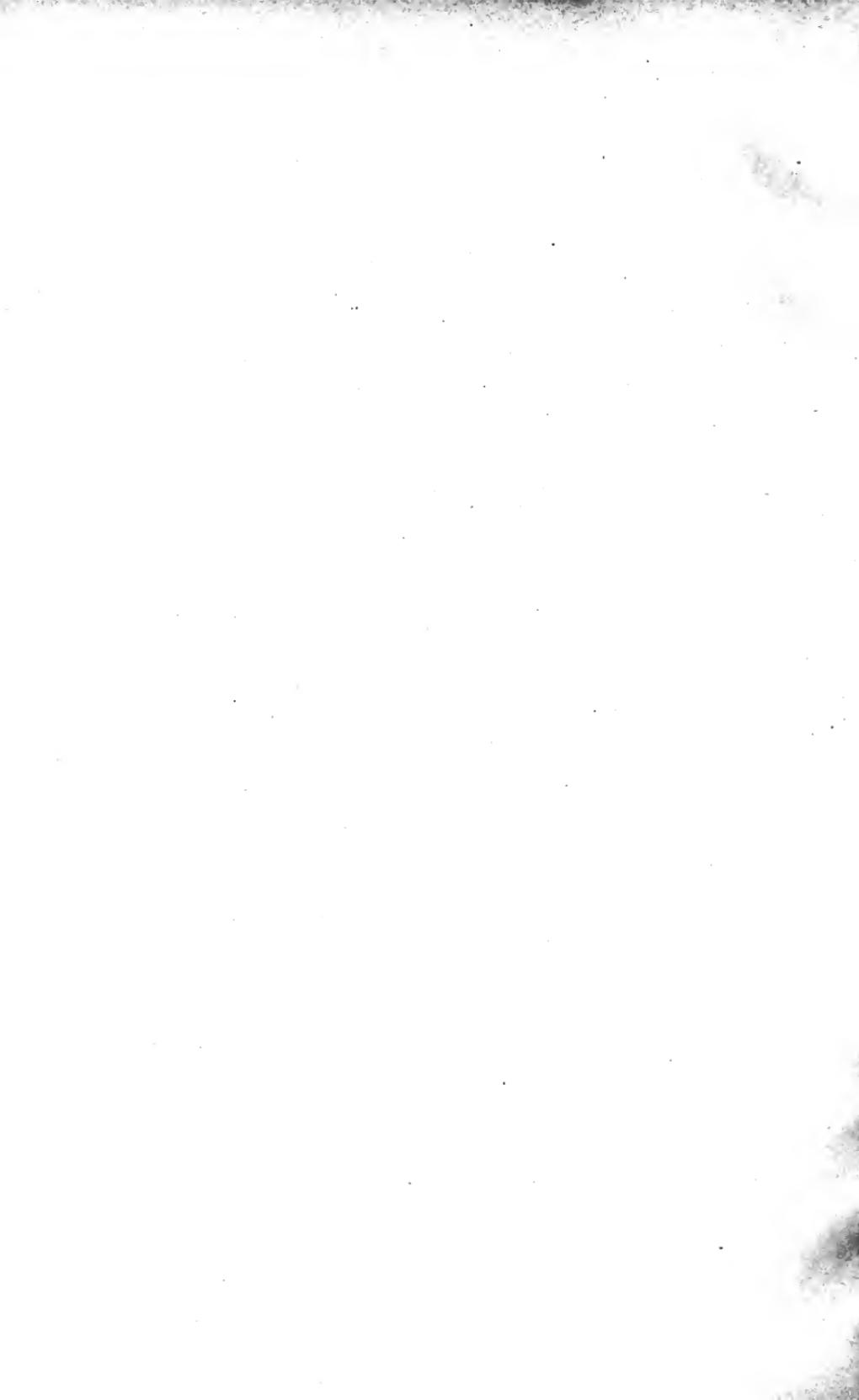
Everything, however, that Dr. Ward has revealed in regard to the appearance of objects below the surface of the water is of great importance for salmon fishers. He shows that what is most to be considered in a moving lure is "flash," that is to say, the intermittent gleam from its bright surface or points as it catches and reflects the light. That enhances the value of tinsel, though feathers will also reflect the light to a considerable extent too, especially such feathers as those of the jungle cock, which are so much used as cheeks. The chief use of feathers apart from their reflecting power is their movement, which gives to the fly an appearance of life.

It would be too long a matter to go into the question of light angles, and the appearance of a fly at various positions in the third of a circle which is roughly what it covers in its passage across the stream. But it will be quite obvious that it must undergo great changes as it moves from one point to another, and that from a dull, vague silhouette it may suddenly turn into a gleaming object, or *vice versa*. What this connotes is also obvious—the advisability of studying every individual pool with the object of ascertaining how a fly will appear to a salmon at different times of day and from different directions. It should be possible by experiment and deduction to work out a regular programme for any pool, and almost to have a time-table, which would indicate, say, a small sober-hued fly offered from the right bank at 11 a.m., and a bright pattern twice as big from the left bank at 5 p.m., and which would suggest variations of procedure for dull or bright weather, for morning or evening, for spring, summer or autumn. As a general rule the system evolved would no doubt agree with the conclusions which have been reached on most rivers by practical experience, but it would be based on something more definite than the formula "It has always been so," which is what we have mostly had to go on hitherto. And in some cases I fancy it would enable us to catch fish in places where we have been able to do little or nothing before—there are such places in nearly every river.

Anyhow Dr. Francis Ward has given us the opportunity for a fascinating new branch of study in the



Hen Salmon, 27 lb., showing the spots acquired during spawning. These indicate that the fish has spawned before.



art of salmon fishing and he deserves much gratitude. Whether his teaching greatly increases the weight of the bag or not, it adds a new interest to the sport, which will I am sure be appreciated. As has often been said, killing fish is not the whole of fishing, and most men are strongly attracted by the scientific issues which the use of rod, line and flies raises for their attention.

#### THE STORY OF SALMON SCALES

By the kindness of Mr. J. Arthur Hutton I am able to show a series of photographs from his fine collection which illustrate some of the salmon's development from the egg to the mature fish. One confirms Scrope's observation as to the parr-marks under the smolt dress. Another shows how a salmon which has spawned before acquires spots below the middle line, and others show the story which is told by the scale-markings.

It will be seen how the inner half of the scale (that which is covered and protected by an overlapping scale) is covered with a tracery of fine concentric lines, and it will be noticed how these lines are arranged in groups, alternately set close together and more widely spaced. This indicates alternations in slow and rapid growth of the fish to which the scale belonged, which alternations occurred in winter and summer respectively. By the number of these groups one can tell with certainty how many summers and winters the fish has lived in the sea, and with almost as great certainty how many it passed in fresh water before migrating. Some scales

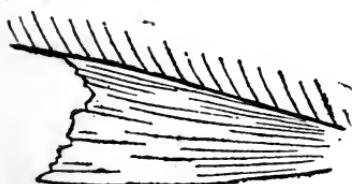
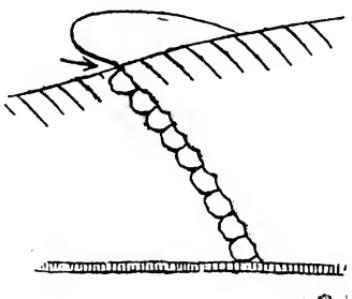
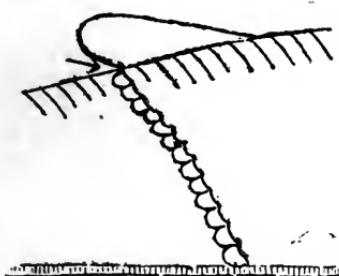
are harder to interpret than others, but as a rule their story can be read with a low-powered microscope (X10) or even with a strong magnifying glass.

One scale (p. 56) displays what is called a spawning mark, a thick dark line which is very prominent among the fine ones and which goes all round the scale, not being confined to the protected portion. The spawning line is caused by the fact that when a salmon is in the river for spawning purposes growth stops altogether and the outer edge of the scale becomes frayed and worn owing to the general wastage of tissues that is caused by the great strain of long fasting and deposition of milt or ova. If after spawning the fish survives and manages to get back to the sea as a kelt, growth begins again and the scales grow with the rest of the fish, new lines being formed on their circumference to mark this growth. But the spawning mark remains indelible and is a permanent witness to the fact that the fish has been to the redds at the end of its fourth year of life.

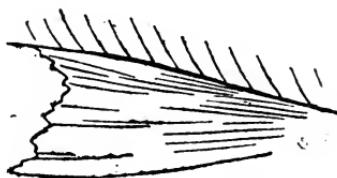
The study of salmon scales is extremely interesting, and as has been said earlier is very important economically. Those who wish to go into the matter more deeply could not do better than get Mr. J. Arthur Hutton's little book *Salmon Scale Examination and its Practical Utility* (1910) which is an excellent survey of the subject. Various interesting and instructive papers are to be found in the literature issued by the Scottish Fishery Board and in the *Salmon and Trout Magazine*, the quarterly journal of the Salmon and Trout Association.

## THE SCALE FORMULA AND MOUTH TEST

The difficulty of distinguishing small salmon from large sea trout or parr from little trout used to be a constant trouble to anglers, and I do not think even experienced men felt quite happy about it till the simple and easy tests of the size of scales and mouth were suggested. The credit of this real piece of good work belongs, I think, to that distinguished naturalist, Mr. G. A. Boulenger of the British Museum. He



Scales of Sea Trout.

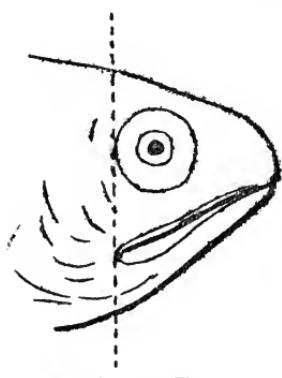


Scales of Salmon.

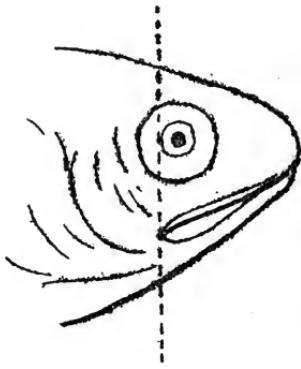
pointed out that the salmon had larger scales in proportion to its body than the sea trout or trout, and that a distinction between the species could be made by counting the scales between the posterior edge of the adipose fin and the lateral line forwards in a transverse series. The salmon has from nine to eleven scales in this position and the trout from twelve to sixteen. The usual numbers are nine or

ten in the salmon, fourteen or fifteen in the trout. A line drawing shows how the counting is done.

This method could, of course, be applied to the distinction of parr and little trout, but it presents difficulties as the scales are so small in both, and the parr is, it is to be hoped, alive when the examination is being made, and is due to go on living. For this emergency the test is even easier, and it consists in looking at the mouth of the fish. The salmon,



Head of young Trout.



Head of young Salmon.

though it has bigger scales, is blessed with a smaller mouth than a trout of the same size, and this is particularly noticeable in the parr. The maxillary bone in this little fish only comes to below the centre of the eye. In a trout of the same size it will come to below the hinder edge of the eye or even beyond it. It is curious that in the very careful drawings of parr and smolt which distinguish Scrope's book the distinctive size of the mouth has not been properly delineated. The accompanying line-drawing will, I hope, make the point clear. The little fish shown in Mr. Hutton's excellent photograph (p. xviii) illustrate it also very well.

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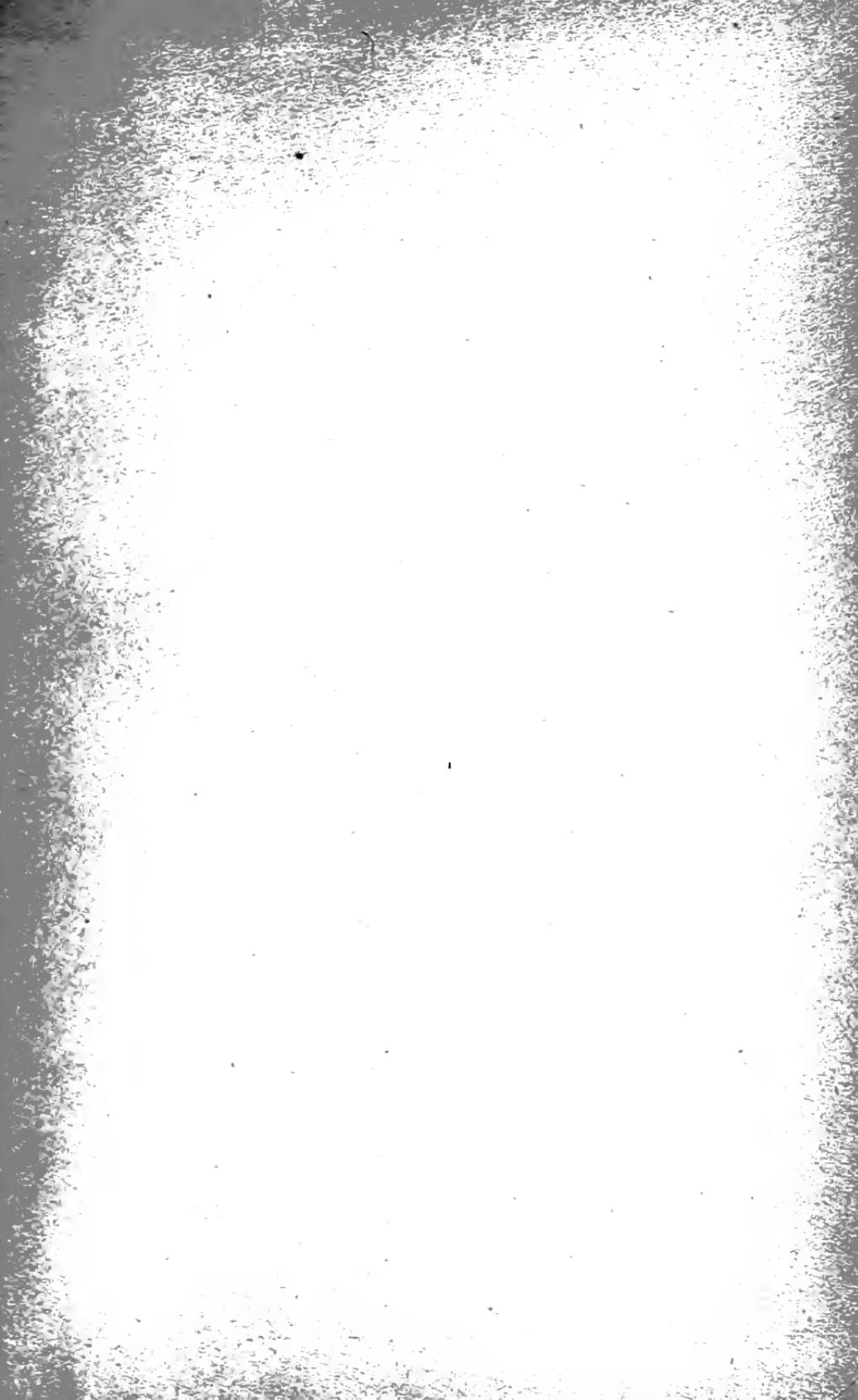
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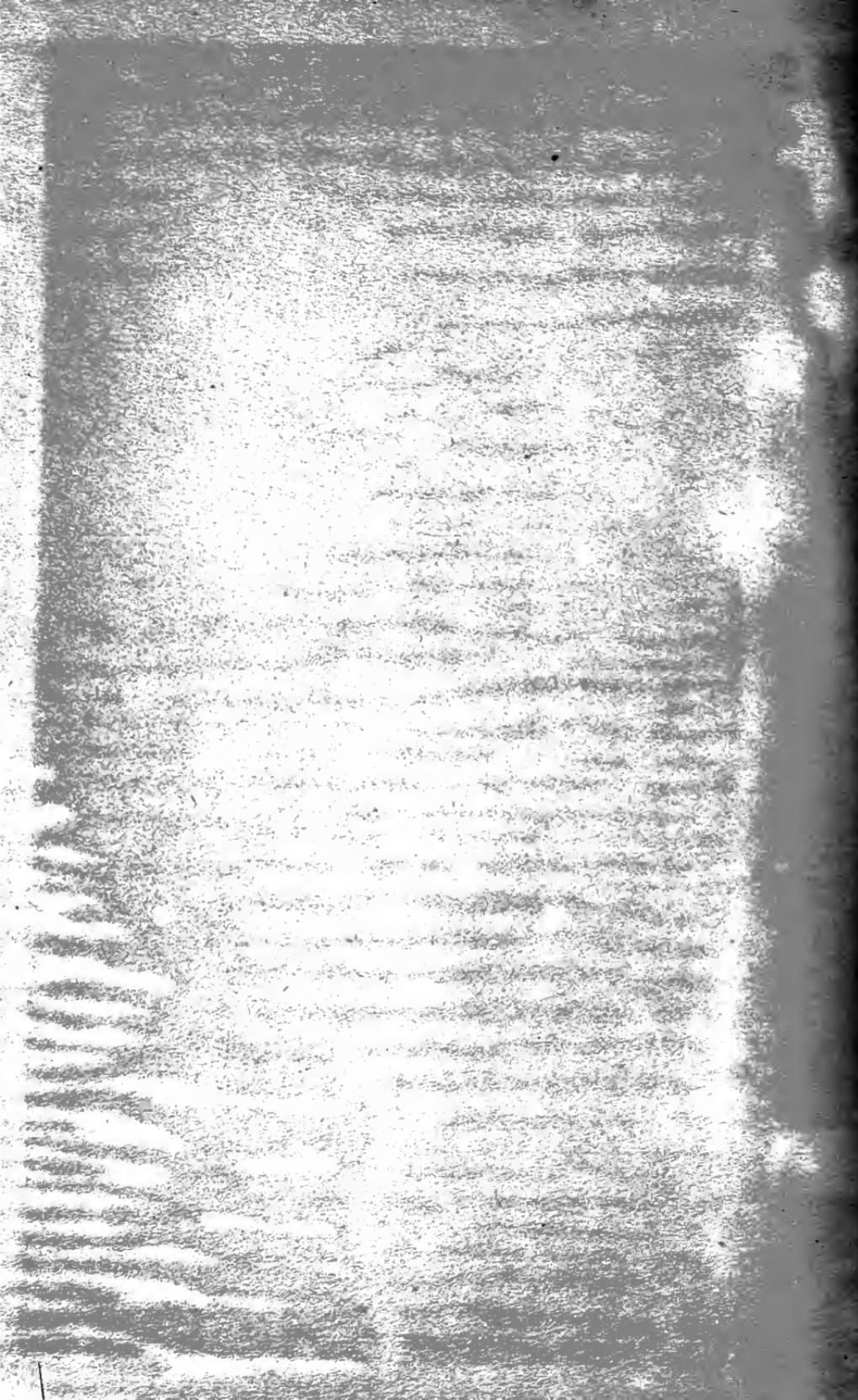
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